Mindless Conservatives—*Henry Fairlie*

Michael Foot on the First Novelist • Garry Wills on the Third President

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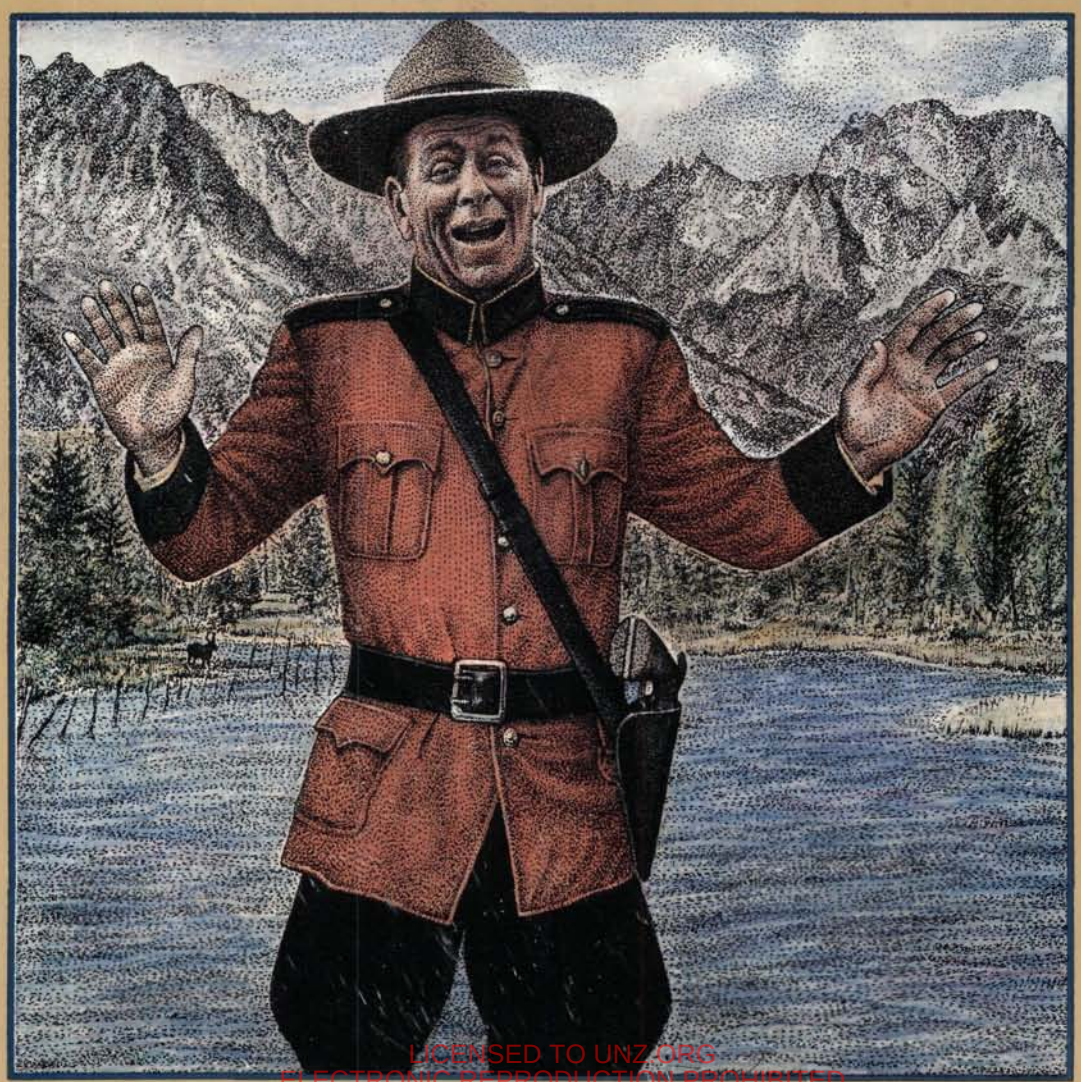
Reagan in Canada

BY MORTON KONDRACKE



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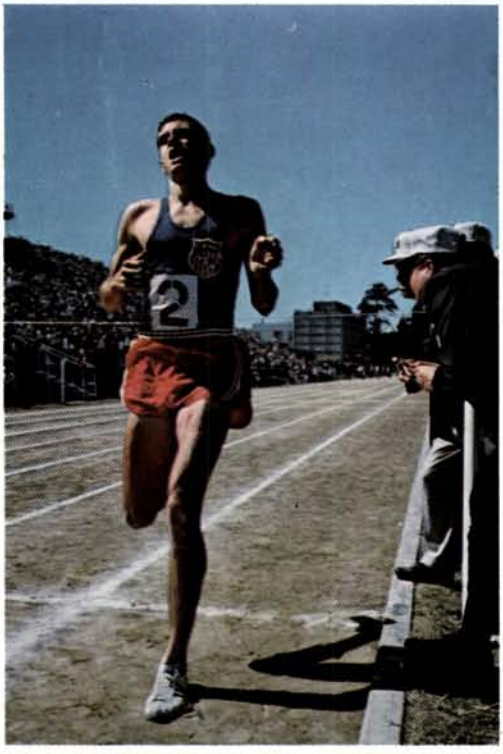

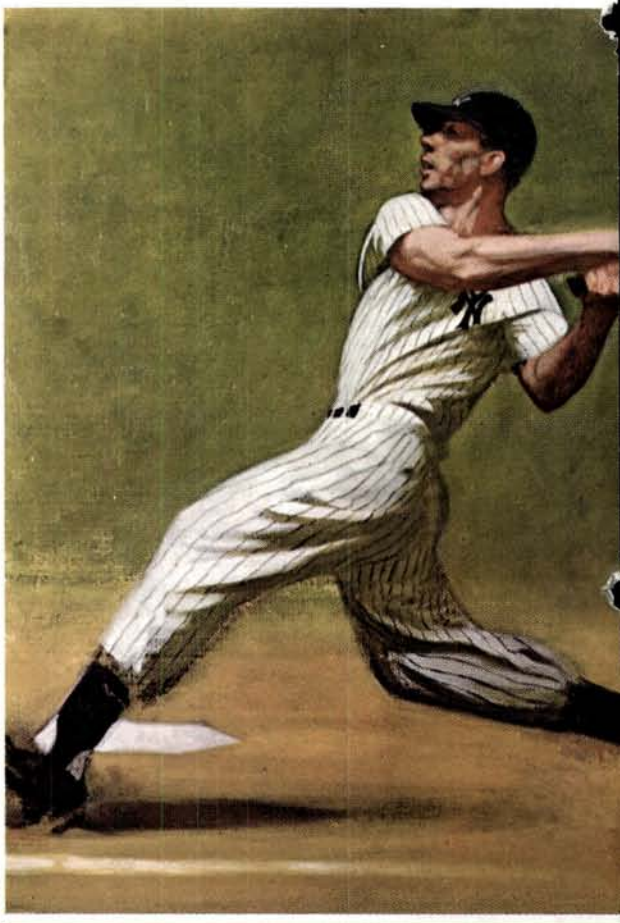

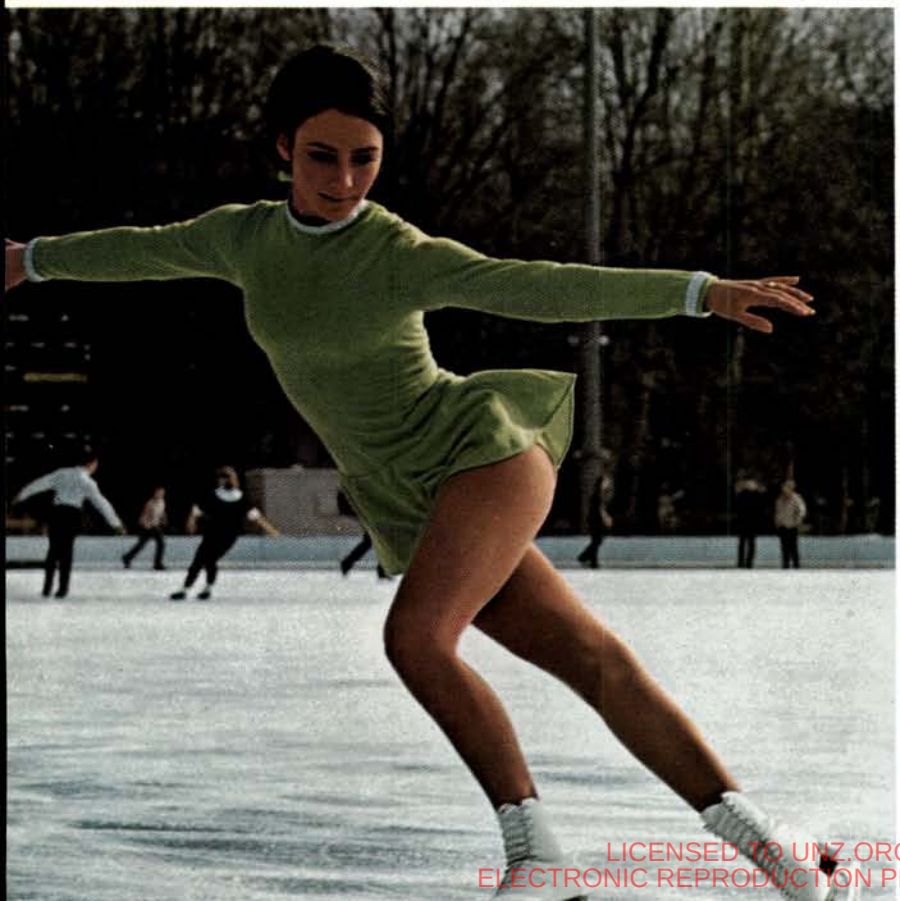

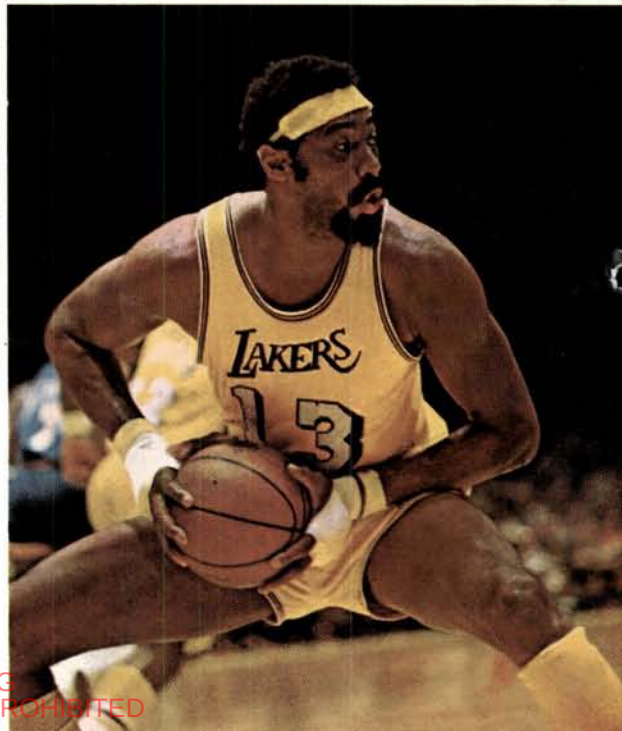

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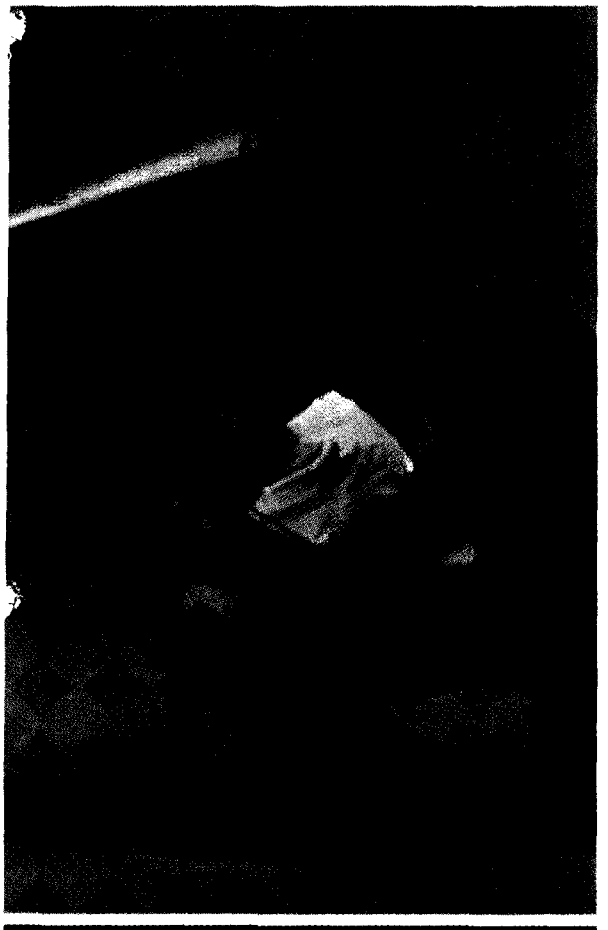

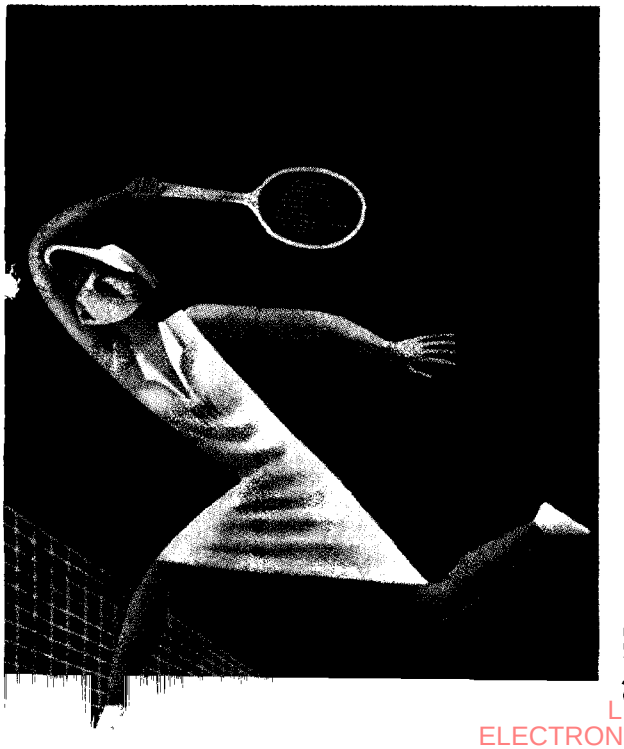

We look at them and we feel like cheering. They are some of our great ones, the heroes and heroines who delighted us and inspired us—and still do. Now we can meet them all, and 94 other greats, in their lively portraits and marvelous memorabilia at the National Portrait Gallery's dramatic exhibition, "Champions of American Sport."

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"Champions of American Sport" organized by The National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. It will appear there June 23 to September 7, 1981 and subsequently travel to Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, IL, October 15 to November 29, 1981; California Museum of Science & Industry, Los Angeles, CA, January 15 to February 28, 1982; and American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY, April 2 to June 27, 1982. The exhibition is sponsored by Philip Morris Incorporated and Miller Brewing Company.

(top left) Giles Litho Company. JAMES J. CORBETT DEFENDING HIS TITLE AGAINST CHARLIE MITCHELL, 1893. Chicago Historical Society. (top center) Photograph of JIM RYUN by RICH CLARKSON, 1966. (top right) Harvey Dinnerstein. THE WIDE SWING, 1975. Capricorn Galleries, Bethesda, Maryland. (bottom left) Photograph of PEGGY FLEMING by John G. Zimmerman, 1968. (bottom center) Photograph of WILT CHAMBERLAIN by WALTER IOOSS, JR., 1972. (bottom right) Miguel Covarrubias. HELEN WILLS, c. 1927. Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin. *© Philip Morris Inc. 1981*

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TRB

from Washington
August 1 & 8, 1981

Time for Talk

It is time that President Reagan gave us another press conference, or perhaps a fireside chat. During his first six months in office his control of Congress has been extraordinary, but now questions are beginning to accumulate. A chief executive governs America by persuasion and by his ability to appeal to the public. This relationship needs to be freshened periodically. Franklin Roosevelt held about 50 press conferences in his first six months; Reagan has held three, plus a televised report in February in which he declared that "we are in the worst economic mess since the Great Depression." This launched his tax- and budget-cutting program. He has carried the demoralized Democrats before him in a masterful manner, purposely limiting the debate to his economic program for conquering stagflation. Critics charge that he is aiding the affluent at the expense of the poor, but no strong spokesman has yet appeared on the other side. Reagan has changed the nation's course, for better or worse. Shortly a new phase will begin.

Newspapers last week carried a poll showing that millions of Americans have doubts about the financial soundness of the Social Security system. There is an intimacy about this relationship to many people that is almost religious. They make regular contributions to the system and believe that somehow it will sustain them in their old age; they dream about a retirement cushioned by a monthly check from the government. Some 36 million people, or about one in six, find it a vital source of retirement income. It is doubtful if before this year politicians realized quite what a sensitive matter it is. Certainly Reagan didn't. Last May Secretary of Health and Human Services Richard Schweiker casually sent the Senate a proposal to cut Social Security benefits across-the-board 10 percent, and to reduce payments of persons retiring at age 62 by 40 percent. The system was in trouble, he said. There were hints that the administration hoped to balance the budget by making economies here. The reaction in the Senate was shocked incredulity. The Republican-controlled body rejected the proposal 96 to nothing, and it came within one vote of accepting a Democratic denunciation of the administration.

The incident raised questions about the political judgment of the administration even in the hour of its prospective tax-budget triumph. Democratic senators Pat Moynihan and Ted Kennedy keep the issue alive. They are formidable advocates who argue that the administration needlessly frightened Social Security beneficiaries. Republicans see the political danger of the situation and they, too, are looking ahead to the next act of the Washington presidential drama as the honeymoon ends. In a letter to congressional leaders, Reagan blames the Democrats for planting distrust of the system. He calls it "opportunistic political maneuvering" that is "cynically designed to play on the fears" of beneficiaries. He says that he may take to the air waves to discuss the issue. By contrast, Kennedy charges that "the administration spokesmen have put a line of fear across this country among the elderly people."

The fact is that the system is in trouble from various causes. Some pensions are indexed to the cost of living so that the expense rises with inflation. Then there are demographic problems. People live longer than they used to, so they enjoy their pensions longer. Thirty years ago life expectancy at 65 was around 79; now it is 81. America is maturing. There are five workers today to help defray the pension of the 65-year-old worker who retires; before long there may be only half that number.

Jimmy Carter thought he had it all fixed up in 1977. Taxes were raised to meet the higher costs and these hikes are still continuing: his program calls for new boosts in 1982, in 1985, in 1986, and again in 1990. (Reagan argues that his own tax cuts simply neutralize the increases that are already scheduled.) Here is a vast, complicated, emotional battleground of politics, and it remains to be seen how good a commander and exponent Ronald Reagan is. He has a tendency to let subordinates carry the ball. David Stockman did more than anyone to organize and articulate the budget fight. Then again, up at the Ottawa Summit, it was genial Counselor Edwin Meese III who expounded the Reagan position before TV cameras. The other day at the National Press Club in Washington, Chief of Staff Jim Baker (another aide who writes "III" after his name) crisply defended the six-month record of the administration, though he acknowledged that "all of us wish . . . that we had handled the Social Security issue with more care."

It is not certain yet that Reagan has established firm lines of communication with the public. His three news conferences so far (interrupted by the assassination attempt) sometimes sounded as if he were reading answers from cue cards of old campaigns. The Russians think it permissible "to commit any crime: to lie, to cheat," he charged. He repeated the favorite formula that those who come under "so-called social reforms . . . are made subservient to the government that is handing out the largesse." Wall Street and the bond markets can't quite believe that his economic program is going to work: allies complain of towering interest rates; there is anxiety over Social Security; how do we deal with Menachim Begin in the Middle East? There is the first touch of scandal in the cloak-and-dagger CIA and the resignation of Max Hugel. On the other hand, Reagan's choice of Sandra O'Connor for the Supreme Court has soothed some of the doubters.

As a new chapter opens, what Democrats need most is somebody with a strong national voice. That's what the opposition leader does in the parliament in Ottawa; that's what the press corps sometimes does in Washington when it gets the chance. If Reagan asks air time to discuss Social Security, Democrats should ask for equal time, and should have something to say in response.

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Correspondence

Liberals under the influence

To the editors:

Jack Beatty was correct in his article on patriotism when he discussed the confusion liberals have toward war ("The Patriotism of Values," *TNR*, July 4 & 11). So confused are they that even Beatty cannot escape the influence. For example, Beatty defends American wars as being "liberal and humane" endeavors waged for progressive presidents but feels compelled to exempt the Mexican War from his support. Yet the Mexican War was by far the most successful of all US wars since the Revolution. The Mexican War not only confirmed the annexation of Texas but also brought into the Union the land that eventually would become California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, and parts of Wyoming and Colorado. It is disturbing that liberals would rather justify 350,000 American casualties in World War I on Woodrow Wilson's naive and unworkable principles than acknowledge the benefits of the Mexican campaign—benefits that were at minimal costs.

I will fight on behalf of my country, my family, and my friends, but I have no desire to risk my life for an abstract theory or as an intellectual exercise. The conservative doctrine of realpolitik is much more moral than is the crusading spirit of liberalism.

William R. Hawkins
The University of North Carolina
Ashville, North Carolina

Hatchet job

To the editors:

Professor Joseph W. Bishop Jr., in his review of *The Enigma of Felix Frankfurter* and *Independent Journey: The Life of William O. Douglas* (*TNR*, June 27), does a hatchet job on Professor Ronald Dworkin. Dworkin's views on legal philosophy are controversial, but he has supported them with closely reasoned arguments, and his legitimate critics have disputed them with arguments of similar quality. These arguments appear primarily in legal and philosophical journals that most readers of *The New Republic* do not follow. (Dworkin's pieces in the *New York Review of Books* tend to reflect his philosophy, not expound it.) Bishop's comments on Dworkin amount to no more than ridicule in a forum in which they generally would not be recognized as such.

Henry Cohen
Columbia, Maryland

Ball-park figures

To the editors:

In "Coming of Age in Chicago" (*TNR*, July 18), James Atlas proves his own statement, "I no longer know the players, no longer even know the teams," by stating, "The White Sox were in sixth place in the American League's Eastern Division. . . ." Not only are they in the Western Division of the American League but not once in this strike-shortened season have the Sox ever dropped to sixth place! "Are there any American men indifferent to baseball?" It seems that Mr. Atlas is much more indifferent than this woman.

Catherine A. Dunlap
Chicago, Illinois

Frank lament

To the editors:

It is rare and refreshing, when reading the name Bayonne, to find praise and understanding of its citizens' homey values, rather than the usual condescension ("Frank Liberalism," by Emily Yoffe, *TNR*, July 4 & 11). Indeed, Barney Frank's great humility and understanding can be attributed to his working-class, hearth and home, background here. It saddens me, however, to think that even though you can't take Bayonne out of Barney, you can so easily pluck Barney out of Bayonne.

Alan Butvinik
Bayonne, New Jersey

The purpose of memorial

To the editors:

In the Washington Diarist of May 23 Charles Krauthammer talked about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. His statements were inaccurate. The memorial design was a basic concept submitted for our national design competition. Like designs for almost all things which are built, it must go through a development and refinement process, which is now going on. During this period such details as safety, access for the handicapped, exact size, identification as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, size of the lettering, and so on are being addressed. While the particulars are not yet worked out, the memorial will be safe, will provide access to the handicapped, and will be clearly identified as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Krauthammer said that the purpose of the memorial is to impress upon the visitor "the sheer human waste, the utter meaningless of it all" and "to reflect the moral ambiguity of the war." That is simply not true. The memorial makes no political statement about the war. The purpose of the memorial is to honor and recognize all the American men and women who served in Vietnam, particularly those who died. It will do so magnificently with its gleaming, onyxlike, 400-foot long facade—bearing the names of all 57,692 who gave their lives—set in a two-acre site of green lawns, stately trees, pleasant walkways, and modest landscaping.

Jan C. Scruggs, president
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund
Washington, DC

Charles Krauthammer replies:

This memorial not only makes no *political* statement about the war, it makes no statement at all. With sympathy and admiration for Vietnam vets living and dead, I was suggesting merely that the names of the fallen be accompanied by a statement, perhaps only a phrase, honoring their sacrifice. Scruggs says in his letter that they "gave their lives." Why not say that on the memorial and, perhaps, add "in the service of their country"? Or is that too political a statement?

Intellectual thugs

To the editors:

It's pointless to argue with Michael Walzer's highly impressionistic caricature of the "new cold warriors" in his "Totalitarianism vs. Authoritarianism" (*TNR*, July 4 & 11). If I happen to think, for example, that Castro is qualitatively

(continued on page 40)

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BACK ISSUES AND RECEPTION
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PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR
Kathy Sullivan

TYPESETTING
Marlene Davis, John O'Neill, Lila Ward

GRAPHICS
Kenny Grady, George Kibler

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

August 1 & 8, 1981

Wrongs and Rights in Lebanon

Destroying an Iraqi atomic bomb factory is one thing. Bombing PLO headquarters in a crowded residential neighborhood is another. The difference is one of ends and means. In the Iraqi case, the end was to eliminate for the foreseeable future a major threat to Israel's safety. The means was a precision attack calculated to cause as few casualties as humanly possible. The recent Israeli attack on Beirut, however, was aimed at a military objective of minimal, if not marginal, importance. The means chosen involved predictable casualties for hundreds of innocent civilians. And although this was not a carpet bombing whose sole aim was to kill civilians—the fact that the PLO admitted that one of its headquarters had been largely destroyed indicates that the Israelis, in fact, hit their objective—the raid was morally indefensible.

Had this particular neighborhood been housing Katyusha rockets or, to make the case more extreme, a nuclear weapon aimed at Israel, then the moral calculus would be different. But this was not the case. One does not kill 300 civilians for a minor objective. Israel, to its credit and at high cost, had lived by this standard for 30 years. Until the PLO began using southern Lebanon as a base for its terror attacks on Israel, the Israeli-Lebanese border through the 1950s and 1960s was one of the quietest in the Middle East. Lebanon did not attack Israel in the 1956 or the 1967 war, and Israel did not fire a shot across the frontier. In the last decade, Israel's response to PLO attacks on Israel's northern towns has consisted mainly of air strikes and land attacks on guerrilla camps and weapons in the southern Lebanon theater of operation. And when, after the Munich massacre, Israel struck the PLO high command, which directs southern operations from behind the skirts of Beirut civilians, Israel used commandos. This was done at great cost to Israel and for one reason: commandos can shoot at close range and can aim away from children.

To be sure, these kinds of moral calculations have never much preoccupied the Syrians, who for five years have been routinely shelling first Moslem then Christian Beirut, or the PLO. The PLO's stated and consistent policy has been to wage war against Israelis—all Israelis. When they launch raids their *object* is to seize and kill defenseless civilians like those in the Tel Aviv bus and the Maalot school or the Misgav Am nursery. Every Israeli child is to them a soldier of Zionism and, therefore, a legitimate target in their war. They make no secret of this philosophy. Last week Arab League ambassador to the UN, Clovis Maksoud, was asked how he could justify the indiscriminate Katyusha rocket attacks on Israeli towns. He replied coolly that one must first understand that the Palestinians are fighting to reclaim their national rights in their homeland which has been usurped by the "Israeli entity" (a clever locution which serves to placate Westerners by alluding to Israel's name, while at the same time asserting Israel's fundamental illegitimacy, its existence as an "entity"). This, of course, is what is known as revolutionary morality; it insists that all actions that further

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the revolution are by definition moral and that all choices are to be made on tactical grounds alone. The PLO doesn't only say this, it acts on it. As William Claiborne reported in the *Washington Post*, the current round of hostilities began on July 10 when Israel bombed a convoy of Katyusha rockets in southern Lebanon. The PLO response was to launch a massive rocket barrage at northern Israeli cities. They succeeded in killing three civilians and wounding 25 in Nahariya. When Israel retaliated by hitting PLO positions in southern Lebanon, the PLO characteristically reacted by launching more rockets at population centers. This time they succeeded not only in hitting a maternity hospital, but also in pushing Begin over a line that Israel had long observed: Begin bombed Beirut. Faced with an enemy pledged to war until final victory (defined as the extinction of Israel) and whose military strategy is one of continual assaults on civilians, Israel was finally pushed to a breaking point. This is not surprising. But it is still unpardonable. In bombing Beirut, Begin threatens to take Israel part way down the road toward the moral nihilism of his enemy. Begin has yet to reach the point of bombing civilians for its own sake, as the PLO does. But simply bombing military objectives with utter disregard for the consequences to innocent life is already a bridge too far.

BEGIN'S ACTIONS are a threat both to the moral fiber of Israel and to the support Israel still enjoys in the West among those who have not wearied of its cause or sold out to Arab oil. That means, for all practical purposes, the United States. It is difficult to believe that Begin did not know what embarrassment the timing or nature of the Beirut raid would cause the US. It was timed to occur on the very day that President Reagan was to announce the release to Israel of F-16s previously held up because of the raid on Iraq. And it came on the eve of the Ottawa summit when Reagan could already have expected some pressure to move away from his commitments to Israel from the Europeans, with their now-stalled Middle East initiative designed to legitimize the PLO; from Trudeau, who recently won reelection with a nasty Israel-baiting campaign against Joe Clark; and the Japanese, who capitulated to Arab oil threats long ago. And yet after many years a friend of Israel is now in power in France, as well as in the United States. Begin's provocative timing is almost incomprehensible. The most plausible explanation is that he no longer cares what the world thinks. Israel has become more and more isolated in the world. Even its most crucial security interests are ignored and, indeed, undermined by the jackals at the UN and their shameless chorus in the West. As a result, Begin, who unlike Israel's many Sabra leaders is a child of the Holocaust, has retreated to an almost autistic defensive strategy. He now simply discounts the diplomatic impact of his actions and acts only on the narrowest of military considerations. But for Israel to act with total disregard for US sensibilities is a recipe for catastrophe. The administration has already decided to withhold F-16s because of the Beirut attack. That in itself may not be militarily significant, but it is a dangerous precedent. If Begin persists in this myopic Masada strategy, he may yet provoke Reagan into even more serious sanctions against Israel.

Begin has also succeeded in setting the jackals howling in unison. Yasser Arafat, who is one of the fathers of the idea that schoolhouse massacres are things for which one claims "credit," was quick to take to the networks to express shock that "unhumanitarian warfare" was being waged. Representative Paul Findley, who was strangely silent the night the Katyusha rocket hit the maternity hospital in Nahariya, issued the English-language version of Arafat's mock exercise in bourgeois morality. James Reston, as usual, responded by proclaiming the Middle East the root cause of our "problems of interest rates, trade, unemployment, energy, and the alarming and growing cost of military arms"—everything, it seems, but the attack of the Mediterranean fruit fly. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling for a cease-fire. But not until after an entire day of wrangling. The difficulty, reports the *New York Times*, was that "Olaru Ottuno of Uganda complained that the language of the preamble . . . acknowledged by implication that Israel had suffered, too. . . . Mr. Ottuno's objection, supported by the Soviet Union, led to a long day of amending and reamending. . . ." Nothing new here. At the UN not only Israel's air strikes but also her continued existence are considered violations of international norms. No wonder Mr. Begin has stopped listening. If all his actions, no matter how defensible, bring equal calumny, why should he make fine distinctions?

But he can and he must. Because if Israel loses its moral compass it will lose its friends as well as its soul. And while nations seem perfectly capable of functioning without a soul—as demonstrated daily by a solid majority of UN members—small nations like Israel cannot survive without friends.

However, Israel's friends need to make distinctions too. A halt to the fighting over Beirut is necessary, but a cease-fire in place in southern Lebanon will serve simply to allow the PLO to rearm itself with Libyan- and Syrian-supplied Soviet heavy artillery and rockets. That is exactly what happened during the five weeks preceding the current outbreak, when Israel observed a cease-fire while Ambassador Habib was in the area. A cease-fire in place would stop the bloodshed temporarily, but would be shortlived because it would solve nothing. There must either be a permanent cease-fire or there can be none at all. Israel would want nothing better than to return to the status quo ante 1971. If the PLO withdraws out of range of Israel's northern towns, there will be peace in southern Lebanon as there was for 20 years before 1971. But the PLO is unlikely to agree to such an arrangement; they will

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carry on their war. And those who facilely recommend to Israel that the answer is to be more forthcoming in the autonomy talks are simply ignoring the fact that the PLO rejected Camp David from day one and has no interest in autonomy.

We believe that Begin has not been as forthcoming as he should on the West Bank issue, but that is irrelevant to the question of what to do about PLO attacks from southern Lebanon. No Israeli government will ever hand over the West Bank to the PLO. And all Israeli governments will have to defend their northern population from terrorist attacks. For a long time, Israel contented itself with a policy of retaliation for incursions across the northern frontier. In 1979 Ezer Weitzman instituted a new policy of preemptive attack to harass PLO units in southern Lebanon and thus prevent, rather than avenge, attacks on Israeli civilians. The preemptive policy has been demonstrably effective. Since April 1980 the PLO has not succeeded in a single infiltration across Israel's northern border. The Reagan administration, through National Security Adviser Richard Allen, has supported that policy of preemption. Nothing that happened in the past week has made that policy any less legitimate or necessary. For as long as the PLO denies Israel its right to exist and conducts a war on civilians, it is not a fit party with which to negotiate, since its wish is to negotiate only the means of Israel's dismantlement. Meanwhile, any Israeli government will have a duty to protect its civilian population. We hope that it will never again imitate the methods of its enemies. We hope it will continue to observe the distinction between civilian and military targets. But we also hope that when Israel attacks supply lines, bridges, and crusader castles bristling with long-range rockets, her friends will be able to make that same distinction too.

Poland's Revolution

If Karl Marx were alive today, he would not be surprised at what is happening in Poland. Exactly as he predicted, a conscious movement of the entire working class, consisting of the great majority of the population, has risen in spontaneous revolt against the exploiters of labor, the owners and administrators of the means of production. As he knew it would be, the character of that revolt is democratic, and, at the same time, disciplined by an awareness of its own interests. Only one thing would astonish Marx about this first genuine proletarian revolution in history: it has occurred against and within a regime that for 35 years has claimed to rule in his name.

The emergency congress of the Communist party of Poland has come and gone; and if it leaves behind a faint aura of anticlimax, that is because it was less an instrument of a revolution than an imperfect reflection of one that has already taken place. The revolution was made by the ten million members of Solidarity, and it has worked one miracle after another in the past year. It has made the Polish press interesting, reliable, and, to a very large extent, free; it has won recognition for a truly independent trade union federation of industrial, intellectual, and agricultural workers—including the right to strike; it has turned the rubber-stamp parliament into a contentious body which, in televised sessions, rejects as many government bills as it passes; it has won important new rights for Catholicism, including the right to build new churches; it has harnessed the traditionally reactionary force of Polish nationalism and directed it to democratic ends. It has done all this, and more, without the slightest hint of violence, and without the loss of a single life. Now the Polish revolution has done something else that would have seemed impossible a couple of years ago, something that is rather small in the context of its own accomplishments but immense in the context of the history of the Soviet empire: it has turned a Communist party into a political party, and a Communist congress into a political meeting.

The powers that will ultimately decide the fate of Poland are Solidarity and the Soviet Union, so it was not surprising that the Polish people seemed to regard the deliberations in the Palace of Culture as in some sense irrelevant. In any case, the Poles are too preoccupied with the gravity of their economic problems, and too aware of the continuing menace on their eastern border, to feel much like celebrating. Nevertheless, the congress was something wholly new, and wholly salutary, in the history of ruling Communist parties. Democratic centralism was stood on its head—or, rather, put on its feet, however unsteadily. There was no "prolonged and stormy applause" on cue for boiler plate speeches, no unanimous show of hands for prearranged results. Instead of "one post, one candidate" it was "one man, one vote." Two thousand delegates, themselves chosen by secret ballot in contested elections, elected their central committee—by secret ballot, in a contested election, after a session in which the candidates were subjected to questioning by the full congress. These new procedures cost most of the old Politburo members their jobs. All but four of the 15 members of the new Politburo, like most of the delegates themselves, are newcomers; one of them, Zofia Grzyb, is the first member of Solidarity (and the first woman) to be chosen. If she and First Secretary Stanislaw Kania and the rest of them run for reelection at the next Congress, it will be their last hurrah; for the new party rules specify, in addition to the secret ballot, a limit of two five-year terms for positions of leadership.

No one knows how lasting or significant these reforms will prove to be, assuming the Polish revolution is allowed to take its course. The Communist

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party is better equipped to play its "leading role" than it was before its congress; but it is still a deeply discredited organization, held in contempt by most Poles, and its rule would melt away in an hour without the threat of Soviet armed force. The greatest trials, for the party and the country, are still to come. The prime minister, Wojciech Jaruzelski, said in his closing address to the congress that the price of food, fuel, and shelter will soon double, and that wage increases must end. Such sacrifices cannot possibly be exacted without Solidarity's full cooperation, and the price of that will be more political freedom, more economic reform, more democracy—in short, more revolution.

Nor does anyone know what the Soviet Union will do. Many Western analysts thought the party congress would never come off, but the troops did not march in; and every day, every reform and every democratic change that is incorporated into the national life of Poland makes it more certain that they would be met with armed resistance. The Russians are afraid of that, afraid of the enormous cost of assuming (or repudiating) Poland's foreign debt, and afraid of the damage an invasion would do to their relations with the West, especially Europe. They are even afraid, in a small way, of world opinion. This time, if the Russians go in, it will be different. In 1956 and 1968, the West was distracted and morally disarmed. Soviet troops invaded Hungary under the cover of Suez and Czechoslovakia under the cover of Vietnam. There is no such camouflage for them today.

The Soviet army has performed ironic services for the Polish revolution. It is the guarantor of the discipline that enables Solidarity to end a one-hour strike precisely at the 60th minute; the source of the Polish Communists' recognition that they have more in common with "anti-socialist elements" at home than with "fraternal parties" to the east; and the cause of the realization by the state and the police that they had better not bite off more in the way of repression than they can chew alone. Just as capitalism generates the class that undoes it in Marx's theory, Soviet communism has generated Solidarity. Soviet armed forces may yet crush what it has helped to create. Or the Poles, wearying of breadlines and cacophony, may flee from freedom. But the possibility that Poland will become a real democracy on the Finnish model, or, barring that, a genuinely pluralist one-party state on something like the Mexican model, is no longer just a romantic fantasy. If that were to happen, it would crack open a window for evolutionary change in the rest of Eastern Europe and even in the Soviet Union itself. Whether or not the Polish revolution survives, the fact will remain that it happened, and no matter how it is rewritten in the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* or its Polish counterpart, it can never be extirpated. It has already more than earned its place in Polish history alongside the uprisings of 1768, 1830, 1863, and 1944; and we can dare hope it will take its place in world history with the revolutions of Jefferson, Mazzini, and Gandhi.

Dance of the fruit fly.

Brownian Motion

In his two terms as governor, Jerry Brown has learned that one way to maintain high popularity ratings in a heterogenous place like California is to play both sides of the street on any divisive issue. His slick reversal on Proposition 13 is among the finest examples of political opportunism since Italy switched alliances during World War I. Earlier this month, Brown was faced with a vexing political choice. The Mediterranean fruit fly was discovered to have infested parts of northern California, threatening the state's $14 billion agricultural industry which provides half the fruit and vegetables in the United States. The only known effective remedy is aerial spraying of the pesticide malathion, a technique which Florida and other states have used for decades with success and safety. But malathion, unlike the fruit fly or granola, is not "natural." That meant that aerial spraying was bound to offend, if not alarm, many ecologically minded Californians. On the other hand, without spraying, California was likely to lose an enormous part of its fruit and vegetable crop and suffer catastrophic losses. For any other politician the choice between the ecology constituency and the economy of the state would be a dilemma; for Jerry Brown it was an opportunity for neat political finesse. Brown resolutely opposed aerial spraying, calling it an "aerial attack" and a threat to the health of thousands of Californians. This, despite the fact that the scientific evidence overwhelmingly supports the claim that malathion, while deadly to fruit flies, is harmless to man. Brown ordered instead conventional warfare against the Medfly: hand-held ground spraying, backed by a rapid deployment force of California highway patrol to check cars leaving the area for signs of fruit.

Brown's boy scout tactics terrified other agricultural states like Georgia. They had experience with Medfly devastation and didn't want to import California's. They threatened to ban California produce. Nor did Brown's phony war amuse Secretary of Agriculture John Block. He threatened a national quarantine of all California produce unless aerial spraying was immediately undertaken. That was just the setup Brown needed. With the fruit fly spreading and the growers and the legislature breathing down his neck to save the state's agriculture, Brown did what he obviously had to do: order aerial spraying. But now he could blame it on Reagan administration blackmail. They put a gun to my head, Brown said plaintively. And with almost credible anger he announced that he would order aerial spraying despite its risks because allowing the feds to quarantine California produce would be worse. Export crops would then require fumigation, a process even riskier to California workers than malathion spraying.

Having brilliantly maneuvered himself into order-

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ing spraying on ecological and safety grounds, Brown rushed off to San Jose to spend the night under malathion skies to demonstrate that he could live with his lonely decisions. Another elegant move. Since the malathion is, by all accounts, harmless to humans, he was at no risk; but having himself created the hysteria about its safety—to the point where hotels and motels outside the spraying area were booked that night—he could portray himself as spending the night in heroic solidarity with his victimized constituents. Edna-Kay Jamati, a Palo Alto nurse, caught the mood. She described her experience that night: "It was like waiting at wartime for the bombs to be dropped." (It can only be assumed that Jamati has little wartime experience.)

The next morning Governor Brown awoke to face the press and, *mirabile dictu*, he was unscathed. The governor may have marveled at his immunity to malathion. But there is no need to attribute it to his Jesuit training. Like most Americans, he probably sprayed his underarms that morning with aluminum chlorhydroxide, gargled with cetylpyridinium in phosphate buffers, brushed his teeth with *p*-hydroxybenzoate, worked a bit of zinc pyrithione into his hair, and then jumped into his government car trailing clouds of sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide. With all those ungodly synthetics on board, the malathion never had a chance.

Charles Krauthammer

A better way to cut taxes.

For Indexing

Months ago, when they were floundering around for a response to the Reagan-Kemp-Roth tax cut plan, the Democrats should have made indexing their issue. Instead, at the initiative of Republican senators and with the administration's acquiescence, indexing has become part of the Reagan package. The Senate voted July 16 to begin indexing in 1985, after a modified three-year Kemp-Roth cut. A few Democrats, including Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Gary Hart, wisely supported it, while others opposed. But it is a Republican issue now. It is lost as a liberal rallying cry.

Indexing means raising income tax deductions, exemptions, and brackets to reflect inflation. Without it, the same amount of real income leads to higher taxes through a process known as "bracket creep." Indexing should be a liberal issue because it is a far more equitable way to cut taxes than Reagan's approach. Cutting tax rates across-the-board is advertised as evenhanded, but it is not. While the rates go down in each bracket, inflation pushes middle-income people into higher brackets. Those already in the highest bracket are unaffected by this process, yet they get the same percentage break (or even a bigger break in the modified Reagan plan). Furthermore, the basic exemption and deductions play a larger role in figuring the taxes on low incomes than on high incomes. Inflation erodes the value of these fixed-dollar amounts, and lowering tax rates does not affect them at all.

The combination of inflation and Reagan's tax rate cut, therefore, shifts the tax burden down the income scale. Richer people will pay a smaller share of taxes, poorer people will pay a larger one. Some supply-siders cheerfully concede that this is their intention, but Republican publicists have obscured the point. Indexing, by contrast, does exactly what Kemp-Roth pretends to do: it reduces taxes on every income level in the same proportion.

SOME LIBERALS see indexing as a conservative plot to starve the government by building in automatic annual tax cuts. Supporters of indexing, writes Eileen Shanahan in the *Washington Star*, "seek to deny the government, forever, the finanical resources to pay for new government programs." No doubt many of them do. But indexing itself only prevents an unlegislated tax *increase* through bracket creep. Indexed taxes will keep up with inflation, but won't automatically outpace it. Revenues for new programs—including defense programs—have to come either from real economic growth or from an explicit decision to raise taxes. Surely this is how it should be. Honest liberals should not want to raise people's taxes on the sly, and practical liberals should realize they're not going to get away with it anymore anyway.

Another argument against indexing is that removing this particular burden of inflation will make people complacent. "It is absolutely essential that everyone feel the pain," Senator John Chafee (a Republican) said last week. But no one is going to stop noticing inflation because his or her taxes are indexed. The average taxpayer might prefer that politicians worry less about whether everyone is suffering adequately from inflation, and more about stopping it.

After all, the average taxpayer cannot do much about inflation. That is up to the politicians. And for politicians, bracket creep is no burden. Quite the contrary. The money keeps pouring in faster than inflation, without the unpleasantness of voting to raise taxes. In fact, you can vote for a crowd-pleasing tax cut every few years—1969, 1971, 1975, 1976, 1977, and 1978, for example—and yet end up with about the same tax rates as you had at the beginning. For politicians, tax indexing is a rather noble act of self-abnegation.

Indexing keeps politicians honest. This point is often made with reference to big-spending liberals, but it applies to tax-cutting conservatives too. Reducing rich people's taxes and raising those of others may or may

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not be a good idea. But if the tax code were indexed already, Reagan would have to persuade people of its merits in exactly those terms. This is why the administration was unenthusiastic about indexing, and why the Republicans have put it off until they have had three years to monkey with the tax code on their own terms.

Critics of indexing point to countries such as Israel, where everything is indexed and inflation is in triple digits. Certain kinds of indexing, it is true, put inflation on automatic pilot and make it much harder to control. Indexing of wages and government benefits, for example, means that employers and the government will automatically pass through these costs to consumers and taxpayers, causing more inflation, increasing wages and benefits again, and so on. But tax indexing is different. It doesn't prevent taxes from keeping up with inflation; it just prevents them from increasing faster. By doing so, it prevents the discouragement of work and thrift that would otherwise result, and thus actually helps to slow inflation by increasing productivity. Indeed the best "supply-side" tax cut would be to index the measurement of investment and savings profits to avoid taxing phantom gains. (You would also have to index borrowing deductions to deny phantom losses, and make other adjustments.) The sundry malarkey about to become law is a poor substitute for this one simple step.

Michael Kinsley

Why the UN conference failed.

Cambodian Chess Game

United Nations, New York

In mid-July, the representatives of 92 countries gathered in the General Assembly hall of the United Nations to call for the removal of the 200,000 Vietnamese troops now occupying Cambodia. With the pomp that accompanies such meetings, delegates from interested (and uninterested) nations filed up to the podium and lambasted Vietnam for its 1978 invasion. A plethora of solutions were proffered, each one serving the interests of the country proposing it. And the result of the UN conference was a predictably watery resolution which stated that Vietnam should withdraw its troops and that the country's future should be decided by the Cambodians. This directive was undercut before the conference began, since the two countries that will determine the final outcome of the Cambodian quandary were absent. Both the Soviet Union and Vietnam boycotted the meeting, along with some 25 of their friends.

In fact, the structure of the conference precluded a decisive result. China and the Association of South East Asian Nations originally had pressed for a meeting limited to the 30 to 35 principal countries involved in the issue. ASEAN had even requested that the Vietnamese-installed Heng Samrin regime be present. But UN secretary general Kurt Waldheim, carefully guarding his prospects for a third term, was wary about antagonizing the Soviets, who realized that such a conference might succeed in dislodging the Phnom Penh government. So Waldheim waffled. He postponed the meeting as long as he could, and finally ruled that no fewer than 144 nations should be invited and that the Heng Samrin representatives could not attend. This gave Vietnam and the Soviet Union the justification they needed to boycott the meeting.

Still, the UN conference did more than just reconfirm the ineffectuality of the UN. It also exposed the diplomatic machinations and power politics that have come to surround Cambodia. This beleaguered country now finds itself in the midst of superpower rivalry where ideology and strategic questions take precedence over any concern for the Cambodians. There is no better proof of this than Cambodia's continued representation at the UN by Pol Pot's murderous outfit, the Khmer Rouge, which at least implicitly enjoys a remarkable degree of support. Many at the UN seem content to overlook the role Pol Pot played in Cambodia between 1975 and 1978, before he was driven out of Phnom Penh by the Vietnamese. It is estimated that during his rule as many as three million people may have been butchered, roughly a third of Cambodia's population. The Khmer recently has tried to spruce up its image by toning down its rhetoric and by demoting Pol Pot from head of state to chief of the armed forces. But these changes, like the switch from Nazi-style black shirts to Chinese-supplied green shirts, are only cosmetic. Pol Pot's new surrogates at the UN, Ieng Sary and Khieu Samphan, are perhaps less well-known but no less bloodthirsty.

The most widely offered justification for the UN's 1979 and 1980 confirmation of the Khmer Rouge seat is that, despite their record, Pol Pot's marauders formed the "legitimate" government of Cambodia until the Vietnamese violated the UN charter and kicked them out of the country. (This is feeble reasoning, since Pol Pot himself came to power by ousting Lon Nol.) But US and Chinese support for the Khmer stems from other motives. Pol Pot controls some 30,000 troops along the Thai-Cambodian border. His forces constitute the only substantive military opposition to the Heng Samrin government. Pol Pot was quite close to the Chinese during his rule and has been receiving most, if not all, of his economic and military backing from them since his fall. And since 1978 the United States has been intent upon normalizing relations with Peking, so questions of Chinese assistance to Pol Pot have been muted. After all, the State Department wasn't likely to frown upon Pol Pot's

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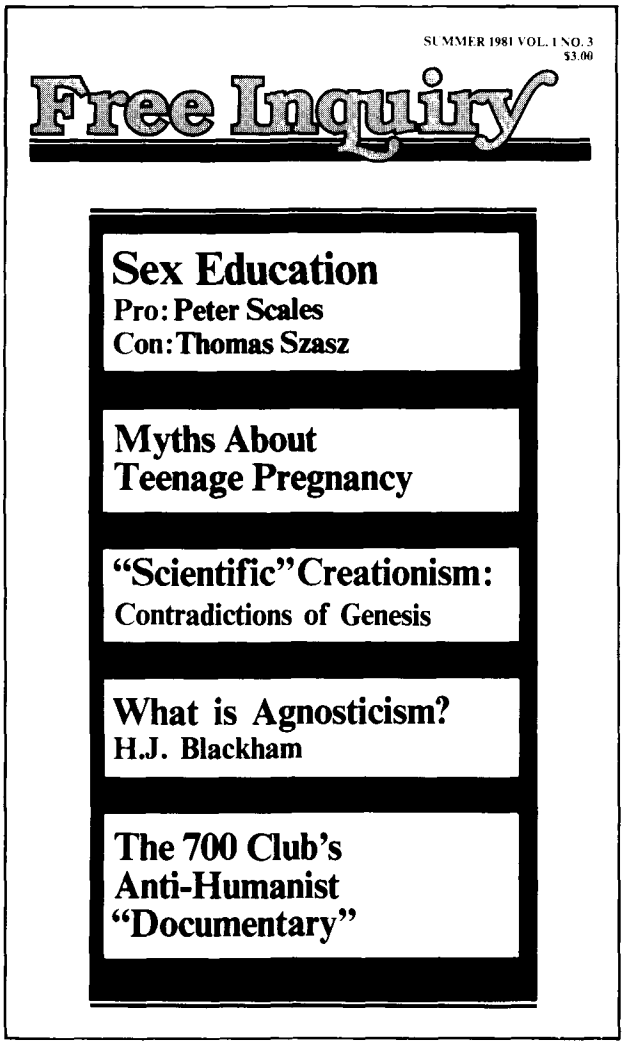

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success in keeping a Soviet proxy like Vietnam off balance in Cambodia.

Although State Department officials maintain that US policy toward the Khmer Rouge remains unchanged, recent statements seem to indicate a strong shift in position. In Cambodia, as in other areas of its foreign policy, the Reagan administration has advocated a bipolar, confrontationist stance, placing greater stress on military might than on diplomatic initiative. A change in US posture first became evident in late April, when the State Department conceded that direct military aid to "nationalist forces" was under consideration. This was reconfirmed on June 16 by John H. Holdridge, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs. Addressing the American Club in Peking, Holdridge declared: "We will seek, if we can, to find ways to increase the political, economic, and, yes, military pressures on Vietnam, working with others and in ways which will bring about, we hope, some change in Hanoi's attitude toward the situation."

At the UN conference, Secretary of State Alexander Haig noted that "Vietnam is paying the price for its blindness in the form of ever-deepening diplomatic and economic isolation from the world community." But the administration has done more than just talk tough. Washington already has succeeded in tying strings to $118 million in United Nations Development Program aid for Vietnam over the next five years. Projects with possible military use—like transportation—henceforth must be approved separately by the development program's 48-nation governing council. No other country faces such restrictions. The UN has blocked the United Nations Children's Fund from making powdered milk shipments to Vietnam and has persuaded the EEC to go along with US sanctions. The US also has dissuaded an American Chamber of Commerce group in Hong Kong from visiting Hanoi. Haig is hoping to starve Vietnam economically until it is forced to withdraw its troops.

Of course, Reagan's get-tough policy toward Vietnam and his tacit support of Pol Pot are closely connected to the US rapprochement with China. Peking's rabid anti-Sovietism conveniently suits the present American policy of sorting nations like fruit and deciding which ones are palatable and which are rotten. On his departure for the Chinese capital, Haig set the tone by adopting Peking's terminology, calling the Vietnamese "Southeast Asian Cubans." And although UN-Chinese discussions on Vietnam and Cambodia remain a well-guarded secret, the reliable *Far Eastern Economic Review* quoted a senior official traveling with Haig as saying that American and Chinese policies were in "very, very close parallel," and that the two countries were working together to apply "political, diplomatic and a full range of pressure" on Vietnam. Haig reportedly urged Peking to increase its arms shipments to anti-Vietnamese forces because "supplying US arms directly to the Khmer guerrillas posed some problems." In exchange, Haig promised to approach the Cambodian problem with renewed vigor. Upon his return to the US, he pleased the Chinese by telling Soviet ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin that Moscow's response to international proposals on Afghanistan and Cambodia will be a litmus test for future East-West relations.

THESE WINKS between Washington and Peking have not gone over well with the Association of South East Asian Nations, the other outside party interested in Cambodia's future. ASEAN traditionally has been wary of China, and America's lifting of arms restrictions to Peking as well as the US-Chinese hardline policy toward Vietnam have caused much consternation. ASEAN's approach to the Cambodian problem has been diplomatic, designed to exploit Vietnam's growing friction with the Soviet Union and its precarious economic situation by enticing it with a hefty aid package. This strategy, however, was beaten down by Haig at the Manila Conference in June. The secretary of state quickly quashed Indonesian and Malaysian calls for step-by-step negotiations with Vietnam and overrode their objections that a hardline policy would only further push Vietnam into Soviet arms. Instead, Haig urged "sacrifice with vigilance and unity to ensure that we maintain collective strength to prevent the forces of evil who would resort again to conflict from having their way." Haig got his way. The meeting's final joint communiqué omitted any conciliatory approach and called for the disarming of Khmer resistance groups only *after* the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops.

So the politicking goes on. And where does all this leave the Cambodians? Certainly far from the minds of those supposed to be helping them. Thanks to China's clever maneuvering and the vast indifference of the other nations, the UN conference's final declaration keeps open the way for Pol Pot's return to power. Contrary to the preference of many in ASEAN for multilateral disarmament, the UN directive allows the Khmer Rouge to remain armed and come back and govern Cambodia if the Vietnamese ever decide to pull out. This, of course, will only strengthen Vietnam's resolution to stay put. Singapore's call for a neutral administrator should elections take place was also shot

Coming:

John Fraser on China.

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Nicholas von Hoffman on the Urge to Merge.

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down. The UN declaration merely calls for "appropriate measures for the maintenance of law and order." As Bernard Nossiter of the *New York Times* points out, this would allow Pol Pot's armed troops to be present in Phnom Penh during the vote. Clearly, all efforts should be made to pressure Vietnam to withdraw its troops from Cambodia. But to do so at the cost of permitting Pol Pot to return is more than an unacceptable exchange, it is morally repugnant.

Michael A. Lerner

Reagan's plan is at least a plan.

Pension Tensions

Barely a week after the Reagan administration unveiled its plan to rescue Social Security from bankruptcy, the world's greatest deliberative body thundered its disapproval. By a vote of 96 to nothing, the Senate righteously condemned any change that would "unfairly and precipitously penalize early retirees" and any reductions "which exceed those necessary to achieve a financially sound system." This gesture could come only from legislators who don't recognize either the gravity of the problem or the unpleasant options for solving it.

As if to rebuke the Senate for its complacency, the system's trustees issued their annual report on July 5. Their forecast is dismal. They warned that "without corrective legislation in the very near future, the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust Fund will be unable to make benefit payments on time beginning in the latter half of 1982." They also noted that Medicare most likely will run out of money early in the next decade. None of this came as a surprise. It was no secret that OASI, which pays basic retirement and survivors' benefits, would go broke no later than 1983, and as far back as 1979 an advisory council had predicted that the hospital fund "will be depleted by 1992 under current financing arrangements." But the administration nonetheless made much of the projections, in the hope of prodding Congress into approving its cuts. So unrelievedly pessimistic was Health and Human Services Secretary Richard Schweiker in his Senate testimony that Daniel Patrick Moynihan accused him of using "political terrorism" to force a speedy congressional surrender.

Moynihan is right to label the reports as political documents designed to advance the administration's program. The trustees, after all, aren't some faceless committee of actuaries but the secretaries of Health and Human Services, Treasury, and Labor, in addition to the commissioner of Social Security. But a little panic on Capitol Hill may be needed. This year, as in the 1977 Social Security crisis, Congress appears inclined to move too timidly rather than too boldly. The accusation of Democrats that the president wants to cut more than is required to erase the trust fund deficit also rests on a dubious premise. Social Security is a program to transfer money from one group of people to another, and not, as its more dogmatic defenders insist, an untouchable social insurance program. There is no good reason to regard it as pristinely independent of the rest of the federal budget. If cutting Social Security expenditures permits other, more important programs to be spared, no liberal should object.

The Social Security crisis actually consists of two crises, which are only loosely related. The first is the short-run threat of a bankrupt OASI fund. This grows out of the vexing performance of the US economy over the last few years, with high inflation coexisting peacefully with high unemployment. This usual malady endangers Social Security because benefits are indexed to the consumer price index but revenues aren't. Inflation has boosted costs just as high unemployment has caused both wages and the number of contributors to stagnate. In what we still think of as normal economic times, wages rise faster than prices, but lately prices have led the ascent. This stagflation explains why OASI is nearly exhausted just four years after Congress bolstered it with the biggest peacetime tax increase in American history. That measure, by the way, was supposed to keep it solvent for at least 75 years.

The second crisis lies in wait early in the 21st century. It stems from the postwar baby boom, the only sustained increase in American fertility rates since the founding of the Republic. For the rest of this century, the baby boom generation will buttress Social Security, as the number of workers paying taxes soars. But when its members begin to retire in about 30 years, they will become a crushing weight. To the misfortune of Social Security, the baby boom was followed by a baby bust. Fertility rates have dropped—and remain—well below the level required for zero population growth. So this bumper crop of retirees will have to be supported by a shrunken work force, meaning that each worker will have to assume a greater share of the system's costs. Right now there are slightly more than three workers for each Social Security beneficiary, but by the year 2035, there are likely to be only two. The taxes paid by each employer will have to double just to finance the benefits currently being promised.

It's no coincidence that a system which glowed with good health for a generation suddenly is vulnerable to any distress in the economy. Social Security no longer has the luxury of many contributors and few beneficiaries, which provided a mammoth financial cushion. In 1950 the system took in 14 times as much money as it spent. Last year, however, it spent $3.3 billion more than it collected. Now whenever the economy catches cold, Social Security gets pneumonia.

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To deal with either crisis, only two alternatives exist: reduce scheduled benefits or raise taxes. Representative J. J. Pickle of Texas, who chairs the Social Security subcommittee, has endorsed a recommendation of two recent advisory councils to supplement the payroll tax with general revenues, and Senator Russell Long of Louisiana, who heads the Finance Committee, has said he might go along. But this too would require either a tax increase or cuts elsewhere in the budget. Allowing the OASI fund to borrow from the Medicare and disability funds, or reallocating the division of the payroll tax, would provide some help in the short run, though probably not enough to keep all three simultaneously solvent. And it would do little to forestall the long-term problem.

The Reagan administration, given these choices, has chosen to cut benefits. In its original budget, it proposed to eliminate college student survivor benefits, which duplicate other federal aid; tighten administration of disability benefits, which often are used as a way to retire early on full benefits; and abolish the minimum benefit, which is paid to workers who have contributed only negligible sums and assists mostly retired federal employees and other affluent retirees. Both houses approved the cuts. (The House later repented and passed a nonbinding resolution to retain the minimum benefit.) But they would save only $25 billion by 1986—a tidy sum but not enough.

REAGAN'S second set of proposals, offered in May, had three main components. It would reduce early retirement benefits, restrict eligibility for disability, and fiddle with cost-of-living adjustments. The first two make good sense, given the lack of painless alternatives. Lowering early retirement benefits would save the OASI fund a considerable amount right away ($17.6 billion by 1986, according to the administration). Under Reagan's proposal, anyone retiring at age 62 would get only 55 percent of the benefits he would be entitled to at age 65, instead of the 80 percent now provided. The intent is to discourage early retirement, which has become epidemic. Since Social Security was created, work has gotten generally less strenuous and lifespans have gotten longer, but no change in the system has adjusted for these shifts. In fact, instead of encouraging people to work longer, Social Security policies have stimulated them to retire earlier. Until 1961, no one under 65 could get retirement benefits. Starting that year, people who retired at 62 were granted 80 percent of the benefits they would get at 65. The effect has been dramatic. In 1963, three out of every four men between the ages of 62 and 64 worked, but today only half do. (Earlier figures for this age group aren't available.) In addition to the considerable drain this trend has been on the trust fund, it has deprived the economy of valuable productive assets.

The disability issue is a bit thornier, but here too the administration has the better argument. Its biggest change is to restrict payments to workers who are medically disabled. Under the current law, other factors, such as age and work skills, can be taken into account. So if a blue-collar worker's bad back limits him to a desk job, and he argues that he is too old to acquire the skills to get such a job, he probably can qualify for disability. This vagueness, though it doesn't sound unreasonable, makes it hard to target disability payments to those for whom the program was intended. It also has contributed to an explosion of disability payments which have raised costs by 500 percent since 1970. Under Reagan's plan, anyone who can't work for nonmedical reasons still will have the protection of other welfare programs.

ONLY THE proposal to fudge on cost-of-living adjustments is hard to justify. First, the administration would postpone the next cost-of-living adjustment by three months—for no reason but to save money. Second, it would lower the adjustment for the initial level of benefits for each recipient, effectively providing only half of the inflation rate. These changes are supposed to look innocuous, but they amount to real cuts in benefits. They have nothing to do with fairness or logic. If the system can't be saved without cutting the basic retirement benefit of recipients, the president should say so. Instead his HHS secretary piously claims none of these changes "cut benefits for [those] . . . currently receiving benefits."

It was this package that the Senate condemned so roundly. The House, where the president lacks the advantage of a Republican majority, is unlikely to be more sympathetic. But once the members take a closer look at their options, they may decide Reagan isn't so misguided after all. Certainly nothing Congress has done this year indicates it would be willing to brave the consequences of another increase in the payroll tax—or to infuse general revenues, which the administration would accurately portray as a hidden tax increase. The payroll tax rate already has been raised by 50 percent since 1968, and the maximum annual tax on an individual worker has risen from $343 to $1,820. The only reasonable approach is to reduce some benefits. Apart from its meddling with cost-of-living adjustments, the administration has managed to limit its cuts to those who can most easily bear the loss. It has also avoided more drastic remedies, such as raising the basic retirement age to 68.

In any event, Congress soon will have to settle down to more sober contemplation of the problem. It has barely a year to find a way to keep the Social Security checks going out. The administration's plan has its flaws, but it is better than nothing. And nothing is what Congress has offered so far.

Stephen Chapman

Stephen Chapman is an editorial writer and columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*.

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Hype and Hope at the Summit

by Morton Kondracke

Ottawa

As the Ottawa summit approached, the Reagan administration was developing an almost Nixonian policy of tightness with information about foreign policy. National Security Council staff members had become virtually unavailable for interviewing. The CIA had closed down its public information office and apparently had told its officers that talking to the press was an offense akin to espionage. Pentagon officials were reminded by memo that unauthorized release of classified information is a crime and warned to be careful about unclassified information too. On-the-record briefings at the State and Defense departments were becoming pat and uninformative, and at State, desk officers in some bureaus had been told not to divulge even the names of members of a country's ruling junta without getting permission first from a public affairs adviser. Under attack from various quarters for not having a foreign policy, the administration seemed determined to deny reporters the opportunity to find out what, if anything, it was.

A pleasant—even overpowering—change occurred with Ottawa, apparently at the urging of White House communications director David Gergen. Instead of trying to control its public image by withholding information about what it is doing, the administration unleashed a torrent of paper, briefings, speech reprints, and television interviews designed to have the summit story reported its way. One White House official said that Gergen and others saw the summit as "a real opportunity to deal with foreign policy in an open way, to demonstrate that the president is effective in diplomacy and to show that we have a foreign policy team that can perform thoughtfully and effectively. We spent a long time thinking about this."

Of the 300-odd press people covering the American side of the summit (part of a media horde of 1,500 from the seven participating countries and other parts of the world), only a handful made it to the actual summit site at Montebello, 40 miles from Ottawa. All the others milled around for three days in the Canadian capital, getting only occasional peeks via closed-circuit television of President Reagan and the six other leaders of the industrialized world as they sat down to talk or eat. For so many reporters to be so idle for so long is a recipe for rumor-mongering and disaster, and so the White House wisely laid on a busy schedule of activities.

Take Monday, July 20, as an example. Treasury Secretary Donald Regan was on the NBC "Today Show." National Security Adviser Richard Allen, almost simultaneously, was on ABC's "Good Morning America." (The CBS morning news had West German chancellor Helmut Schmidt, and the White House thoughtfully provided transcripts of his performance as well as the Americans'.) After breakfast, Allen appeared before a small press pool in Montebello (with his remarks piped back to a ballroom in the American press hotel in Ottawa) to report on President Reagan's morning with British prime minister Thatcher who, Allen said, "indicated that she's in full support of his domestic program. . . . She thinks it's quite a bold program." Then just before 1:00 p.m., presidential counselor Edwin Meese appeared along with Treasury Secretary Regan, also in Montebello (also piped to the throng in Ottawa) to report on a morning plenary session of the seven summiteers. Meese said that despite expressions of concern about high interest rates, "there was a general agreement by the people there that they were appreciative of what they described as the courageous efforts being made by the United States to improve our own economic situation, which everyone felt would materially help the rest of the world improve theirs, and a general feeling of hope that we would be successful." Meese and Regan briefed for 35 minutes, whereupon Meese got onto a helicopter with one Treasury and one State department official to do a live briefing in Ottawa heavily dominated by questions about the Middle East but also providing an opportunity for Meese to reiterate that when the seven met, "several lauded [President Reagan] for the courageous action he was taking with the economy. No one had any other ideas on how to solve the world economy. And several specifically commented they were very hopeful it would succeed." This session lasted from 2:15 to 3:00, after which, at 5:45 p.m., another administration spokesman appeared in Montebello to report on a summit session on North-South economic issues in which, he said, President Reagan stated that aid should be targeted country-by-country (as opposed to being settled upon in the so-called "global negotiations" demanded by the third world and agreed to by some other summiteers) and that aid programs should emphasize "the great power, as he put it, of the private sector . . . not just to feed the hungry, but to teach them how to fend for themselves."

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The day was not yet over. Reporters who cared to could walk or ride a bus the mile to the auditorium where Canadian premier Pierre Elliott Trudeau was presenting his summit chairman's declaration on political issues, followed by a press conference. Back at the American hotel, Secretary of State Alexander Haig came on at 7:55 p.m. to announce the president's decision to hold up delivery of F-16 jets to Israel and to declare anew that the decision "was not related in any way" to efforts to secure a cease-fire in Lebanon. Haig appeared yet again, at 11:30 p.m., on ABC's "Nightline" program, fencing implausibly with Ted Koppel on the F-16 linkage issue. During the day, by my count, a diligent reporter would have spent nearly five hours in the Skyline Hotel listening to American spokesmen explain what was happening at the summit. Diligence would demand reading and underlining the transcripts of these briefings that are painstakingly and efficiently prepared by an overworked staff in the press office. Writing, talking, drinking coffee (provided free, with danish), and eating would easily keep one out of mischief, physical or mental.

INFORMATION overload, mind you, is far preferable to the closed faucet as a form of information control, and I hope that Ottawa represents a decisive turning from one to the other. The old strategy must have been borne of a sense of weakness and a desire to hide mistakes. The new strategy, if that's what it is, could be a sign of growing confidence. At Ottawa, it was employed to make the president appear an economic hero and diplomatic genius, but it finally went overboard, abandoning all subtlety for outright sycophancy, when Alexander Haig was asked whether he thought that President Reagan had managed to settle questions in the minds of foreign leaders about his foreign policy acumen.

"In answering your question," Haig replied, "I don't want to accept its premise. I can assure you that our partners . . . have never had any question about America's foreign policy or the president's ability to articulate it. . . . This week, there was clear and unusual acclaim for President Reagan's foreign policy, his articulation of it and their understanding of it. . . . I must tell you that anyone observing President Reagan's personal performance at this summit could not but leave with a deep sense of respect and admiration for his grasp of the substantive issues discussed, and I can assure you that . . . there are few men, few leaders in the Western world today who have a clearer picture of where he wants to go and how he wants to get there in our economic affairs, both domestic and international." He went on to praise the president's awareness of the complexity and interconnection of economic, political, and security policy.

"Thirdly," said Haig, "I think as an observer and on a personal observation basis the man's ability to deal in moments of stress and tension where there are clearly potential disagreements around the table, to being himself above those petty bureaucratic squabbles, and to set a tone which leads all participants to focus on the importance of solidarity and unity and commonness of purpose, was an outstanding demonstration of our president's qualities, and I don't think any of the leaders who sat down with him over these last two days left that experience without a profound sense of respect for the president's performance here."

Haig said: "I hope I have answered your question." Everyone laughed.

It's impossible to judge firsthand whether President Reagan actually has the grasp of the issues that all his aides claim for him. Although the other summiteers briefed their press delegations personally after the

photo of Morton Kondracke by Joan Shaffer for *The New Republic*

White House Watcher

Morton M. Kondracke, who will conduct the "White House Watch" column beginning with this issue, has been executive editor of *The New Republic* since 1977. Mort Kondracke, 42, is a native of Chicago. He was graduated from Dartmouth College, served for three years in the US Army, and, beginning in 1963, wrote for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, where his assignments included the White House. He is a former Nieman fellow. He and his wife, Millicent, have two daughters.

"White House Watch" was created (originally as "The Nixon Watch") in 1969 by John Osborne, who continued to write the column during the entire Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations and the first months of the Reagan administration. Mr. Osborne died on May 2, 1981.

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meeting, Reagan did not, leaving the task to Haig and Regan. Reagan's one public appearance was at a ceremony in Ottawa's super-modern arts center at which the summit leaders issued brief statements of what had been accomplished. True to his record, Reagan gave the speech most likely to be understood by the general public, avoiding diplomatese and economese. He likened the world's economic woes to Franklin Delano Roosevelt's polio and said that Roosevelt's struggle to recover—recorded in the play "Sunrise at Campobello"—would find its economic parallel in the memory of future generations that "a new sun rose at Montebello."

IT'S DOUBTFUL, though, that all the foreign leaders hold Reagan in the awe described by administration aides. The indications are that he is respected and liked by some and not so much by others. Thatcher and Reagan, of course, are ideological soul mates. Apparently Reagan hit it off rather well with France's François Mitterrand, even though Mitterrand is a Socialist who is intent upon solving his country's unemployment problems by putting 210,000 people on public payrolls. On the other hand, West Germany's chancellor Helmut Schmidt apparently has yet to be captivated by Reagan's magic—or to be won over by the jellybeans that Reagan passed out to his fellow summiteers at one of their meetings.

Schmidt's public utterances, the briefings of his press spokesman, Kurt Becker, and conversations with West German diplomats all contained jabs at Reagan, his policies, and approach. On one TV program, for example, Schmidt was asked what he thought was Reagan's greatest strength. He replied: "My feeling is that although being a very intelligent man, he is thinking along simple lines and I like this because that makes him a dependable partner." Not exactly worshipful, that. What does he like least? "Well, to tell the truth, I found it difficult to understand that it took the new administration so many months until one got the feeling that they were going . . . a little slow, yes."

Several important policy differences separate Schmidt and Reagan, as was well known to all sides at Ottawa and to the press. However, in briefing West German reporters, Schmidt's spokesman seemed to go out of his way to put digs into Reagan. For instance, Reagan is more anti-Soviet than Schmidt. Reagan wants to cut down on trade with the Soviet Union, especially in military-related technologies, and also hoped to get Schmidt to cancel or delay a natural gas deal with the Soviets. Becker reported with some glee that France's Mitterrand at one point had demanded to know of Reagan: "How come you canceled the grain embargo, and yet you want to tighten trade?" Reagan's answer was not reported. Similarly, Becker made Schmidt out to be stalwart in standing up to Reagan on the natural gas deal, rejecting American alternative proposals and the argument that Soviet gas would make Europe too dependent on Soviet energy sources.

The West German spokesman also reported that during a three-hour fireside conversation on the summit's opening night, President Reagan pledged that he would end an era of American military weakness before entering negotiations with the Soviet Union, and at one point quoted Lenin to the effect that if the Soviets could control first Europe, then Asia and Latin America, North America would fall into their laps without conflict. West German reporters took this as evidence of naive anticommunism, and the sophisticated Schmidt was reported to have said that he would not stand for a Western drive for military superiority. "The Russians have an inferiority complex and an obsession with the United States," he reportedly told his summit mates, "and to compensate, they arm themselves to the teeth." About Reagan's shift of East-West policy Schmidt reportedly said: "An alliance is like a convoy of ships. It is out of the question that by a change of captaincy, an attempt will be made to steer a different course."

MUCH OF THIS can be written off as playing to the domestic audience in West Germany, where a show of independence from Uncle Sam is now popular, especially on the left. In reality, the change in the American captaincy will indeed mean a change of direction for the alliance. But away from the West German press, diplomats still expressed deep concern—in spite of Reagan's supposedly masterful summit performance—that he is still floundering. One well-placed West German official said that his government was disappointed that Reagan had not used the summit for a full explanation of his foreign policy. "After Carter, we hoped for clear leadership," he said, "but ever since election day, we are told that everything is under review—Middle East policy, SALT, Africa. This provides opportunities for the Soviet Union to play the angel of peace in its propaganda. Even while it is killing people in Afghanistan, it carries on a worldwide peace offensive that many people in Europe believe. We depend on Alexander Haig to have a special understanding about this, but we constantly read that Haig's position is weak, and so the Europeans get puzzled.

"There are more questions of who's in charge. It's Vance-Brzezinski all over again. Just lately we read stories that Allen is not briefing the president anymore on foreign policy, that Haig is criticizing Kirkpatrick, that Haig is in trouble for criticizing Kirkpatrick. They said they wanted to do it better than Carter, and the Europeans were desperately looking for that, but we're getting exactly the same thing. What Schmidt meant by his 'convoy' remark was that an agreed basis of all alliance policy exists which can't be put into question every time there is a new American president. We understand that a new administration will want to study and review, but we feel it's inadmissible that one new member of the alliance wants to reconsider the whole basis of its existence. Suppose every-

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body wanted to do that? We have no doubt that the Reagan people will come up with the same answers as other administrations have, but the constant review produces immobility. We can't get on with anything."

These sentiments obviously mean that the rosy administration picture of Western unity behind Reagan's leadership is not entirely accurate, but there is some reason to think—or at least to hope—that some progress was made in Ottawa. The sheer time and effort that went into preparing for the summit meant that the president was forced to concentrate on foreign issues instead of only domestic ones. Reagan's aides say that he really read the material provided for him by an interagency committee supervised by Vice President Bush, or at least the boiled-down version prepared by White House aide Richard Darman, and that the president was an active interrogator in two National Security Council meetings and two other briefing lunches held on summit issues. Aides always say such things about the president they serve, but any attention by Reagan to foreign policy is a welcome development.

The actual results of the summit indicate some willingness to follow America's lead—out of necessity, if nothing else. Reagan emerged unmoved in his dedication to his economic program, and after a time his partners were forced to be quiet about their doubts. When they had Carter, they wanted a determined leader. Now they have one and (along with the rest of us) they can only hope that what he is doing is right. On East-West policy, Reagan won agreement at least to consider curtailing trade in high technology to the Soviets, though the gas pipeline seemingly will go ahead. The Europeans hated it, but went along (at US insistence) with a statement on the Middle East that did not specifically condemn Israel for its raids on Lebanon. Reagan agreed to global negotiations with the third world after Trudeau said the North-South summit scheduled for this October might fall through if he did not, but the administration reserved the right to define the kind of negotiations it will enter into.

Possibly most important, the Reagan administration's often-warring foreign policy personalities and bureaucracies may have had a chance to work closely enough with each other in Ottawa to keep the peace back in Washington. Publicly, Richard Allen went out of his way on more than one occasion to be deferential to Haig. Haig fell all over himself in an effort to be seen playing on the same team with the White House. With any luck, the administration now will be confident enough in its own cohesiveness to keep the information flowing and let the public in on what it's doing.

A house undivided against itself cannot think.

Ideologues Without Ideas

by Henry Fairlie

In the two years from January 1, 1979, to December 31, 1980, the Republican party raised $108.9 million from individual donors. That was six times the amount raised by the Democratic party. After last year's election, between November 25 and December 31, the Republicans raised $5,231,777. The Democrats raised $174,777. The Republican budget for this year is a record $20.7 million. The Democratic budget is a mere $4.6 million. These facts are by no means crucial in themselves. In politics, money does not always talk. The recent victory of an underdog Democrat in Mississippi's fourth district was a reminder of that. The Republicans had put $300,000 into the campaign. The Democrats put in $10,000. ("On our budget," said the successful Democratic candidate, Wayne Dowdy, after he squeezed to his victory, "we couldn't afford a landslide.") But the money that is now so readily available to the official organs of the Republican party tells of more than skill in direct mailing.

There are, for a start, the (sometimes unwelcome) allies of the Republican party. What matters is not only the large number of well-funded, active conservative groups, but also the fact that they are, and operate as, a network. More than 50 of them convened in May this year to form a Council for National Policy, which is intended to have an influence similar to that of the Council on Foreign Relations. Six weeks later a coalition of no fewer than 80 groups announced that it would lobby for the passage of the administration's original proposal to give block grants to the states. It is

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drawing by Vint Lawrence for *The New Republic*

the disparity of the groups, more than the money that is available to them, which is important. They endlessly coalesce (then dissolve, to coalesce again) in support of different causes.

Beyond these groups are the institutes or foundations that—to the satisfaction, apparently, of the IRS—claim to be engaged in educational activities. If their "research" often seems more like propaganda, if their "scholars" and "fellows" do not all seem to be disinterested pursuers of the truth, they nonetheless enjoy their tax-exempt status. Some of these institutes have acquired august reputations: the American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Georgetown Institute for Strategic and International Studies. From the way in which AEI is talked about, one might think that it is as full of intellectual ferment as the University of Paris in the days of Peter Abelard. But it is really only a smoothly run propaganda machine. Through descending levels of pretension, one comes to scruffier foundations like the Freeman Institute. The institute was started in 1974 by a founder of the John Birch Society, and it was still claiming to be educational even while it actively campaigned against Frank Church or for Orrin Hatch. It is to these foundations, august and scruffy, that much business money goes: to the august, from the large corporations; to the scruffy, from more entrepreneurial companies.

All of this fundraising and varied activity seems to constitute a conservative movement that is dictating both the direction of public policy and the terms of political discourse today. To some extent, obviously, it is doing just that. It is running rings around the older liberal organizations, which it admits it is imitating, while using slicker methods than they ever imagined. The last person who tried to get through a report from the Brookings Institution expired in the attempt, and his remains were carried away by disheveled mourners for a wake at the Cosmos Club. But reading a publication of AEI—like *Regulation* or *Public Opinion*—is no more demanding than watching "60 Minutes." Liberal organizations like Planned Parenthood are dowdy in comparison with conservative organizations like Right to Life. The right's vigor, spurting all over the country, is not just Viguerie. There must be something there.

So Irving Kristol would have us believe when he says: "We're so unused to seeing a Republican party with ideas that we feel it's revolutionary. The GOP hasn't before been the party of intellectuals, to put it mildly. But this is where the ideas are now." A study prepared for the Republican National Committee has suggested that it should finance a television show to be called "Ideas"—"not to present the party line but rather to 'let a thousand flowers bloom' in the Republican ideas garden." The Maoist metaphor ought not to

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take anyone aback. The vocabulary of the popular element in the conservative movement is radical. It promises to "radicalize" the ordinary citizen and "mobilize" his anger. As far back as 1978, it was talking of a "flowering" of conservative candidates who would "raise a standard" and be "firmly in the vanguard." Some of its phrases might have been lifted straight from Marx. It calls welfare recipients "a dependent class of citizens living off the fruits of productive laborers"; and much of its activity resembles that of Communist cells.

YET ONE LOOKS into the Republican garden, and finds it bare of ideas. There is a simple test. If this were a genuine movement of ideas, it would have generated an opposition within itself, at the political, and especially the intellectual, level. But the only opposition is at the popular level, when President Reagan is thought to have strayed from the narrow path of the revealed truth, as in his nomination of Judge Sandra O'Connor. If the Republicans are now the party of intellectuals, then they certainly are not behaving with the ill grace for which intellectuals are valuable. Intellectuals are meant to hound, badger, plague, bait, pester, beset, and generally be altogether impossible. Standing against the political world, they are its indispensable goad. No politician can abide them—politicians are nicer than intellectuals—but none will do well without them. Intellectuals should be a hair shirt to a successful politician. They should make him scratch. But the conservative intellectuals now only polish the riding boots of their president. They are grooms at the stable, valets in the bedroom, butlers in the pantry, stewards in the countinghouse. Read their literature—criticisms of the administration are there and are developing, but there is no feistiness.

When conservative columnist George Will wrote of the "imperishable grace" of President Reagan, one reluctantly decided that it was time that he signed up with the Cubs and went on strike. *Commentary* has sadly reduced itself to setting up straw men—women and gays—and taking a grim satisfaction in toppling them. This should be the proudest hour of the *National Review*, as it moves boldly to the ground of the loyal opposition. But both the nuclear and the extended family of the Buckleys is the "range of exhausted volcanoes" of which Disraeli once spoke, "one of those marine landscapes not very unusual on the coasts of South America." To read the *National Review* now is like watching fireworks on a damp night. It fizzles.

There are exceptions, of course. The *Wall Street Journal* plants itself ever more firmly on the "eastern, corporate, establishment" ground from which, predictably, it will one day lambast this administration. And there is always—more so than ever—Irving Kristol. Anyone who worries and scurries and flurries his way through the mass of conservative literature which now buries his desk must be frankly delighted that the status Kristol has gained in the conservative movement is matched by a genuine and increasing stature. Oh! he elides and slips and evades in argument. His wonderfully constructed paragraphs—he knows that the paragraph is the unit in writing that counts the most—almost stop one from going back to see what he has said. The Romans put *gravitas* among their virtues; and the importance of Kristol is his gravity.

Yet again and again—and it is this which is relevant to the rest of the conservative movement—he is entangled in a predicament. One element of this predicament is that the conservative no longer has an enemy. No one is clearer than Kristol in saying that the appearance of a conservative movement is a reaction to the vacuum left by the liberals. Like the throb of a bass, this accompanies his tunes: the liberal center has crumbled, the liberal agenda has been done. In all his writing there is a nostalgia for liberalism that is profoundly moving. Without that lost cause, he would have no cause. He came whence he came, and he does not dishonor it. He has another virtue of the Romans: *pietas*, the worship of one's ancestors. (It is all in *Two Cheers for Capitalism*, one of the few collections of essays which deserve to have been collected, and so have the character of a book.) But those ancestors are liberal, and with all of his *gravitas*, and all of his *pietas*, he finds nothing that inspires him, moves him to the cadences of those paragraphs, in the conservative movement to which he is now lucklessly attached. If liberalism wishes a testimonial, let it look into Kristol's sorrowing. He interprets the founding fathers to his advantage, as anyone can at the turn of a wrist, recycling them as more conservative than the Earl of Bute. But it really does not wash. As he hammers away at his definitions of "republic" and "democracy," it does not stand up. For all his efforts to make them conservative, they come out liberal. For this, as he knows, is America. It is not Europe.

It is no surprise that one of the severest critics of the neoconservatives is Kevin Phillips, the fleeting prophet of intellectualized populism and the southern strategy, and whatever else is bundled together in the mishmash of the new right. Phillips is quite right in his protest. Many who call themselves conservatives today are only lost liberals. But this only confronts us with the fact that the conservative movement is composed of three main elements which mix no more satisfactorily than oil with water. There is—rightly, I think—

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a vigilant anticommunism. There is—rightly, I think—an alert concern with the disappearance of traditional values, and the failure to replace them with any others as plausible. There is—rightly, I think—a genuine curiosity about the connection between the free market and civil or political liberty. These are the unifying themes. All of us, if we are honest, feel their pull. But not only is each at war with each—which Kristol admits, and which is natural—but each is at war within itself. The neoconservatives do not feel or think the same about anticommunism or traditional values or the free market as the new right or the Moral Majority. There is even a difference between those who defend the free market on the grounds of its efficiency and those who seek to justify it on much wider political and even moral grounds. (Kristol on the whole puts Milton Friedman among the first and Friedrich Hayek among the second.) These differences are deeply ingrained in the fuzzy day-to-day efforts of the administration to turn the country in a new direction.

The administration is basically doing nothing but stripping away the excesses of liberalism—too much regulation, too heavy taxes—and it is no doubt true that liberalism would not have slimmed down if it had remained in office. But the real worry is that all that astonishing conservative activity which was described at the beginning has no certain intent. It is cleaning up the liberal act. It is anti-McGovern—still!—more than it is pro-anything. That is why there is no loyal opposition within the conservative ranks. It still sees its enemy as outside itself. It will not fight within itself to clarify its purpose. The danger of this conservatism is not what it wants to do, but that it has no idea at all what it wishes to do, except tear down "the liberal power structure."

The same study which recommended that a thousand flowers should bloom in the Republican garden also insisted that there should be tight discipline over wayward officeholders. The contradiction is telling. It points to a church so weak in its faith that it cannot accommodate the heretics in its own ranks. It is not that the conservative movement is so powerful which disturbs; it is that it is without faith in anything except the persistence of its ill-funded and dowdy liberal opponents.

What Vietnam veterans need, and what they don't.

The Vet Offensive

by Timothy Noah

Few topics have received as much anguished attention lately as our national inattention toward Vietnam veterans. In the press, concern about indifference toward the Vietnam veteran has reached epidemic proportions. Anyone who thinks otherwise can't have read *Time* magazine's exhaustive July 13 cover story on the subject. "The new attention to the problems of the Vietnam vet," says *Time*, "really does amount to something deeper than fad." Honest.

In the wake of all this sympathy, it seems paradoxical to conclude, as *Time* does, that little has been done to ease "the Vietnam vet's profound sense of exclusion, his bruised conviction that America—a nation that cherishes almost an ideology of its own fairness—has done him deeply wrong." Those hurt feelings clearly persist, but the fact is that this has been a good year for legislation on behalf of Vietnam veterans. A recent hunger strike conducted by some disgruntled Vietnam veterans ended when they took a look at what Congress has been up to lately. Though Ronald Reagan tried to cut $131 million for Vietnam veteran counseling, employment, and education out of the budget, he *failed*. Congress reinstated all three programs, and when the House acted to extend one of them (veteran-to-veteran counseling), the vote was unanimous. Low-interest Small Business Administration loans of up to $200,000 soon may be available to Vietnam veterans. All this is in addition to the wide range of federal programs that address problems that seem to apply only to Vietnam era veterans—problems such as exposure to the herbicide Agent Orange and "posttraumatic stress disorder," an ailment that the American Psychiatric Association says is peculiar to Vietnam veterans, rape victims, and a few others.

For all the talk about the Vietnam vet's poor educational attainments, well over half of those eligible for education and training assistance under the GI Bill have taken it—a rate ten percent higher than that of veterans of the Korean War, and over 20 percent higher than that of World War II veterans, who are

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generally considered a pretty well-educated lot. For all the talk about the Vietnam veteran's employment troubles, Vietnam vets have, according to the most recent figures, higher median incomes than nonveteran males—at a time when unemployment rates among Vietnam veterans and nonveterans are roughly equal.

MUCH OF THE SUFFERING of the Vietnam veteran has been exaggerated in the press. Take one of the most widely publicized problems associated with service in Vietnam: exposure to Agent Orange. It did indeed take Congress a long time to look at the problem. And when bills were finally passed last June in the House and Senate authorizing the Veterans Administration to treat health problems that may be caused by Agent Orange, the legislation left a big loophole: the VA will decide which ailments are connected with exposure to the herbicide. Clearly, it will be in the overburdened VA's interest to conclude that few, if any, claimants have a right to treatment. But assertions that Agent Orange causes a wide array of diseases—everything from nervous disorders to birth defects—are based on medical evidence that is at best debatable. Robert Nimmo, the new head of the VA, recently shocked the press with the statement that "there's no body of medical evidence" to show that Agent Orange causes anything worse than chloracne, a skin disease that is similar to acne. Few press reports added that the National Academy of Sciences has said basically the same thing, and that most of the people who handled the drums of herbicide were Vietnamese. Although only 1,200 American servicemen are known to have either handled drums containing Agent Orange or flown on missions to spray it across the Vietnamese countryside, over 5,000 veterans have filed claims against the VA for damages.

To be sure, Vietnam veterans have problems, and liberals and conservatives alike tend to be solicitous of them. Liberals generally think of Vietnam vets as victims, either of a pointless war or of rich kids who, by virtue of a student deferment or an expensive lawyer, managed to send those less well-off in their place. Conservatives tend to think of them as patriots, perhaps even heroes. Only an improbable pacifist would blame the war on the GIs who fought; only an improbable libertarian would object to extending traditional veterans' benefits on the grounds that this would expand the welfare state. Most people think that veterans should get everything they need to reintegrate themselves into society. The trouble is that insofar as veterans *have* reintegrated into society, they have obscured their identities—and thus their needs—as veterans.

The difficulty of figuring out what sorts of problems can be attributed specifically to being a Vietnam veteran is well illustrated in a recent study prepared for the Veterans Administration by the Center for Policy Research in New York. The study notes:

> Adjustment problems are not distributed equally among all veterans who were in Vietnam. For example, among white veterans, increased exposure to combat leads to excessive drinking, while among blacks, it contributes to heavy use of drugs. Low level jobs are primarily characteristic of veterans who have not gone on to college, while those with some exposure to higher education may be more prone to experience inner conflicts associated with the controversy of the war. Unemployment is especially likely to plague black Vietnam veterans, while a greater proportion of whites have failed to take advantage of the educational opportunities available under the GI Bill.

In other words, many problems that veterans might blame on the Vietnam War could be more directly related to being white or black, educated or uneducated, rich or poor. It seems self-evident that combat in an unpopular war might aggravate a predisposition to drink (if you're white) or to take drugs (if you're black). Still, how much can we blame the war for problems that are common throughout society? If the problem is alcoholism, why not battle alcoholism rather than "white veteran alcoholism?" To separate Vietnam vets from the rest of society purely on the basis of the greater tendency of some of them to drink or brood doesn't seem a very good strategy to reintegrate veterans into American life. A lot of people drink; a lot of people "experience inner conflicts associated with the controversy of the war," veteran and nonveteran alike. Perhaps if veterans were encouraged to recognize the similarities rather than the differences between their problems and those of nonveterans, their sense of isolation would diminish. The alternative—compartmentalization—leads to absurd statements like that of Lynda Van Devanter, a former nurse lieutenant in Pleiku, quoted in *Time*: "Woman veterans are the last minority." Are they? What about Puerto Rican veterans? Homosexual veterans? The cross-matching game can be played indefinitely.

THE PROBLEM of compartmentalization becomes important when the Veterans Administration, which is the second largest federal agency (after the Defense Department), determines its spending priorities. For instance, does the VA really need to provide psychiatric care and alcoholism and drug addiction rehabilitation? Psychiatric care is obtainable elsewhere, and can be paid for through Medicaid if the recipient can't afford treatment. Psychiatrists who don't specialize in "posttraumatic stress disorder" should nevertheless be familiar with its symptoms, flashback and depression. Similarly, existing community drug and alcoholism treatment centers should be able to help veteran and nonveteran alike. Where good treatment for problems like these cannot be obtained by the poor, it should be made available—for everyone, not just veterans.

This may sound insensitive to the special problems of veterans, but it's not very different from what Vietnam vets say about the treatment many veterans

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of earlier wars receive from the VA. Many ailments typical of old age can be attributed to service-connected disabilities, thereby making an older veteran eligible for treatment in a VA hospital. An amputee, for instance, has a greater likelihood of suffering a heart attack than a nonamputee. So amputees under the age of 65 are entitled to coronary care through the VA. And since virtually any wound or strain acquired in one's lifetime assumes greater significance with age, the Veterans Administration considers *all* disabilities after the age of 65 to be service-connected. The result is overcrowded veterans' hospitals. An elderly World War I veteran who suffers a heart attack may have no less a claim to veterans' benefits than a Vietnam veteran who suffers from "posttraumatic stress disorder." But the World War I veteran isn't likely to get much sympathy from a Vietnam veteran who has to compete with him for hospital space. John Terzano of Vietnam Veterans of America complains that such people turn VA hospitals into a "geriatric care unit." Terzano doubtless thinks these people are entitled to care somewhere. But not at the VA hospitals, which have been overburdened in just about every way, most notably by a war which brought back an unprecedented number of seriously injured men saved by new medical technology.

RESENTMENT on the part of Vietnam vets is aggravated by the fact that political competition for benefits tends to be unequal, favoring the older generation. Powerful veterans' groups like Veterans of Foreign Wars, dominated by veterans of World War II and Korea, are inclined to offer only lukewarm support to many new programs that help Vietnam vets. When testifying in favor of a bill, VFW lobbyist Philip Mayo often makes the qualification, "provided that funds for such an initiative would not serve to reduce or eliminate existing programs."

If the VA were to cut back on redundant services like treatment of veterans over 65 (who have Medicare), psychiatric counseling (available through Medicaid), and alcoholism and drug addiction rehabilitation (provided through local programs), it would be able to address more fully one problem that is more directly related to having served in the Vietnam War: poor educational attainment. Unlike many other problems that veterans blame on the Vietnam War, poor educational attainments are directly and indisputably the result of having enlisted or been drafted into the armed services at a time when wealthier kids went to college and enjoyed student deferments.

Those figures about the Vietnam veteran's impressive educational and vocational accomplishments are, it turns out, a little deceiving. True, lots of Vietnam vets went to college, lots of them have jobs, and lots of them make more money than their nonveteran counterparts. But few of them actually completed their education, few of them attended prestigious private colleges, and few of them hold jobs that hold any promise of advancement. The report of the Center for Policy Research says that this last condition is more prevalent than can be explained by differences in background between Vietnam veterans and nonveterans. (More Vietnam veterans come from poor families.) "This leads us to conclude that military duty in Vietnam had a negative effect on post-military achievement," the study says. Lee Sloan, one of the study's four authors, explains that the apparent contradiction between a high salary and a low position is the result of relatively high entry-level pay for blue-collar work and the longer university careers of the well educated, which make many men "poorer" than their working-class counterparts until they reach their late 20s. "In a short period of time," predicts Sloan, "in terms of occupation *and* income, nonveterans will surpass veterans."

IT WOULD NOT have been unreasonable for a high school graduate who wanted to serve his country back in 1965 to expect that after the war his country would reward him with an education. What better grounds for entitlement than risk of life and limb? But since 1966, when the first in a series of GI bills granted Vietnam veterans less money for tuition than Korean War veterans had gotten (not figuring in inflation), the federal government has failed to provide for much more than a year or two in a community college. The average Vietnam veteran right now is in his mid-30s, with a wife and kids. How is he going to support his family and pay tuition on $342 a month, the current subsidy rate? By going to night school, perhaps, or, if he's lucky, a state college. Stuart Feldman, who has been lobbying for a more generous GI Bill for years, says that in the school year 1947-48, over half the student body at Harvard, at Dartmouth, and at Johns Hopkins universities consisted of World War II veterans. In the school year 1971-72, the percentage of Vietnam veterans at those schools was between one and three percent. Of these three schools, only one, Johns Hopkins, managed to increase significantly Vietnam veteran enrollment by the school year 1975-76, the peak year for GI Bill spending. That year, there were fewer than five Vietnam vets at Dartmouth.

The widening postwar gap between the cost of an Ivy League education and the cost of a state college education is not, of course, the fault of the federal government. But every time an attempt is made to increase funding for the GI Bill, or to extend the deadline (currently set at ten years), the cry goes up that, big as the Veterans Administration is, it can't afford to be too extravagant. Why? Because it has to support so many people with so many problems. All those drug addicts, all those alcoholics, all those heart attack victims from World War I. They need help too, but helping them shouldn't necessarily be the job of the Veterans Administration. Educating veterans should. Some problems have more to do with being a soldier than others.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Deux From France

If you fume about a neglected masterpiece, you can sometimes help to get it attention. It's much harder to get attention for neglected good small works. And since, in any art, there are more good small works than masterpieces, the neglect of the former is always proportionately higher.

If you have never seen Ozu's *Tokyo Story*, which had some trouble getting started in this country, you have missed a major experience in art. But I can't assert the same about Pascal Thomas's *Don't Cry With Your Mouth Full* (*TNR*, May 10, 1975), a gentle French film, full of countryside and youth and discovery. If you've never seen it, you've missed something pleasantly tender; but, since the drum can't honestly be beaten any louder than that, you've probably missed it forever. (In a theater, at any rate. A 16 mm print is rentable.)

At least you don't need to miss Thomas's new film, which is almost equally pleasant and tender. *Heart to Heart*, which Thomas wrote with Jacques Lourcelles, is about three sisters, daughters of shopkeepers who move from a Paris suburb into the city. Chiefly it's about one sister, played by Anne Caudry; the script's device is that Caudry is recounting the whole film. Like the earlier Thomas picture, this one is neither momentous nor original: it just (just!) has a lot in it that is taking about the people and their stories.

One daughter is obsessively fecund, marries when pregnant, and doesn't let marriage deter further pregnancies. Another daughter, the family's blonde darling, is raised on romances about herself and gets into troubles that pampered girls often encounter when they expect life to substantiate romance. Caudry is more of a realist and, in fact, more of a charmer. Caudry too becomes pregnant by her lover—the quiet, attractive Igor Labourie—and comes home to confess it to her parents, only to find that they are upset because the blonde daughter has just told them of *her* pregnancy. This knocks Caudry into hysterical laughter.

The stories hold us mostly through the good performances. Caudry is adorable, and so is a child, called simply Emilie, who is Caudry when young. Especially affecting are Daniel Ceccaldi, veteran of Truffaut films and many others, as the basically shiftless father whose only real aim in life is to love his family; and Laurence Ligneres, as his wife, a beautiful woman. (Which helps to break down movie stereotypes. A shopkeeper's wife, the mother of three daughters, doesn't have to be non-beautiful in film any more than in life.) The one consciously Gallic touch in the film concerns Ligneres: toward the end she simply disappears for a few days and, when she returns, expects and gets no fuss for her escapade. This is outside the vein of the film's reality, pure *Cousin Cousine*.

It's hardly obscure that Thomas's idol is Jean Renoir, along with his epigone Truffaut. If Thomas's attitude toward his characters didn't disclose this fact, his camera technique would. For example, the opening sequence is in a courtyard as things are being packed and people are coming and going. It's all handled for a considerable time, well over a minute, without a cut—with pans and dollying: a quintessential "sequence shot" in the Renoir tradition.

International note: Caudry's main problem in the film, the main obstacle to the resolution of her life, is her inability to commit herself to a man, even when she's emotionally involved with him. This is the basic dilemma, for both women and men, in approximately half the new American plays I see.

A quite different view of commitment, love, sex, and contemporary pressures—naturally—from Jean-Luc Godard, along with a quite different way of presenting it. His latest US release was made before the Godard film last released here, *Every Man for Himself*. The earlier one is called *Numero Deux*: it was originally called *Numero 2 (A bout de souffle)*. The connection with the original *A bout de souffle—Breathless* (1961)—is tenuous. Then why *Numero Deux*? Lots of guesses have been guessed, from the position of women in social hierarchy to the nursery bathroom term as an epithet for the world. The guess that makes most sense is that Godard felt he was starting a new career, but then why not *Numero Trois*? His second period, the Dziga Vertov group, began in 1968. He moved to Grenoble in 1975, which is where and when he made this film; and it's not directly connected with the previous phase as far as I can see.

Whatever the title, this picture continues my latter-day experience with Godard. These days I get different rewards and tediums from his work, for at least two reasons: first, in the 20 years since my first Godard film, I've changed (I hope); second, the film world has certainly changed—has become significantly straitened, particularly in the last few years. Godard has become more valuable, even in the ways that he can get tiresome.

Much of *Numero Deux* was made on video tape. (Does this explain the title—a second technology?) In the opening

Films Worth Seeing

Bustin' Loose. A catch-as-catch-couldn't script, but if you feel as I do, you have a Pryor engagement.

The Four Seasons. Alan Alda and five other skilled comedians get maximum laughs in this elongated TV sitcom, written and directed by Alda.

The Great Muppet Caper. What are you waiting for?

Stevie. Small, shining English gem. Glenda Jackson, Mona Washbourne, and Trevor Howard in a uniquely structured, exquisitely made, lovely film about the poet Stevie Smith.

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shot Godard is standing next to a video machine, speaking to us, and at the same time we see his smaller image on the video screen, facing us. This goes on for a couple of minutes. I can't remember a great deal of what he said, but I remember the interesting double image. (Numero Deux?) Very often through the film, we see two images simultaneously, sometimes three. This isn't done with conventional split-screen. Godard uses, inset in the large black theater screen like photographs inset in a black mat, two or three TV screens. Sometimes the concurrent images comment on each other, sometimes not; sometimes one or the other interior screen is blank or filled with TV "snow." One ineluctable point Godard is making is about the force-feeding of the electronic media—including what's being forced on you here.

From this nonsequential, formally varied film, a theme emerges. A young working-class couple, presumably in Grenoble, have two children; one set of grandparents also lives with them. (Grandpa is a former union official, a Communist.) The general intent is to show how political and economic conditions affect private life: to show that shutting the front door or, more particularly, the bedroom door doesn't shut out the world. Many of the images are sexually explicit ones of the couple, and there are also clips from a porno film: all these are treated in ways that refrigerate them. Which is part of Godard's point.

The theme of prostitution has long been dominant in his work, with prostitution signifying everything from selling sexual access to one's body to selling one's time (therefore life) in an office job that one doesn't respect. Lately Godard's use of sex in sexual prostitution has become much more candid. His picture of housewives' afternoon whoring, *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1967), was a Sunday school feature compared with *Numero Deux*. The increased candor may mean more anger and more desperation in that anger.

For me, the changes in my view of Godard, pro and con, are made clearer by this film. I care less and less about what he says. The theme of the picture, the effect of public life on private life, is hardly new; and his portentous *obiter dicta*, on the sound track or printed on the screen, sound more and more like café wisdom. But his vision is not only not repetitive, not only not trite, it keeps ranging, testing, flying. I care very little for what Godard has said in his last two films—I don't think I could quote one complete line—but I care a good deal about what he has seen. In these days of billion-dollar special effects glitz, Godard is showing that the exploration of the two-dimensional black screen by imagination—not by billions—is still excitingly open.

Charles Michener on photography

Shooting War

"If your pictures are not good enough, you're not close enough," said the late war photographer Robert Capa. At a time when there is always a war going on somewhere in the world, Capa's much-quoted burst of *machismo* has inspired a whole light brigade of young photographers seeking fame and fortune to charge straight into valleys of death, armed only with their Nikons. What Audie Murphy was to World War II, Larry Burrows, the *Life* photographer who was killed in camera combat in 1971, was to Vietnam: for the first time in history you now get to be a hero not by firing a gun but by firing a camera at the man who's firing the gun. And since no young man in the terrorized West wants to go to war against anyone except a rock star or a president, just about the only people being photographed with guns in their hands these days are characters out of a Hollywood costume epic—wild-eyed Arabs, Zapata-like peasants, solemn Israèlis, khaki-clad Zulus.

Financed by photo editors who know that few things sell better than horror plus exotica, the light brigade has charged closer to war and its ravages than even Capa might have dared. For the past 15 years, photographers such as Catherine Leroy, Romano Cagnoni, David Burnett, and Eddy Adams have traveled to Vietnam and Bangladesh, Lebanon and Cambodia, Belfast and Biafra, and sent back thousands of pictures in which the reader of his morning paper, Sunday supplement, or newsweekly is invited to share the sensation of bullets whizzing past the light meter, of staring sudden, explosive death smack in the face. Leaf through *Life Goes to War*, a picture history of that magazine's mammoth coverage of World War II, and you will find relatively few shots of dead bodies strewn across open fields, and almost no images of a corpse's face. (In John Florea's full-page shot of a dead American medic in the Battle of the Bulge, the victim's face has been obscured by retouching.) Look at Don McCullin's new album *Hearts of Darkness* (Knopf; $25) or Susan Meiselas's *Nicaragua: June 1978-July 1979* (Pantheon; $22.95, $11.95 paper) and you see just how keen a photographer's unblinking curiosity about war can get without becoming fatal (both McCullin and Meiselas were wounded in action but not killed). These books also show just how close war photography is getting to the edge of something else—street theater on the one hand, and on the other a kind of pornography of suffering.

McCullin's book is well named, for it is the work of a man who, like Kurtz, is as drawn to horror as he is repulsed by it. In his introduction, which is as good a character sketch as he has ever written, John Le Carré reports: "McCullin is talking of the elusive moment or connection with his subject—the *yes*. The moment of naked affinity, when he or she sees him, and forgives him, at death's edge, starving, inconsolably bereaved, when their own child lies dead on the hall floor, bombed in the attack: still '*yes*'. Yes, take me. Yes, take us. Yes, show the world my pain." But McCullin's images of starving Biafrans, Turkish Cypriots in pools of blood, American GIs in shell shock, desolate refugees from Bangladesh would not have their almost Goyaesque power if they simply stopped at showing the world's pain: they also show the photographer's pain and his obsessive need to exacerbate it, to feel it, to reassure himself that he's still human every time he clicks the shutter.

"It's not a case of 'There but for the grace of God go I'; it's a case of 'I've been there,'" McCullin wrote a few years ago in a long, anguished apologia for

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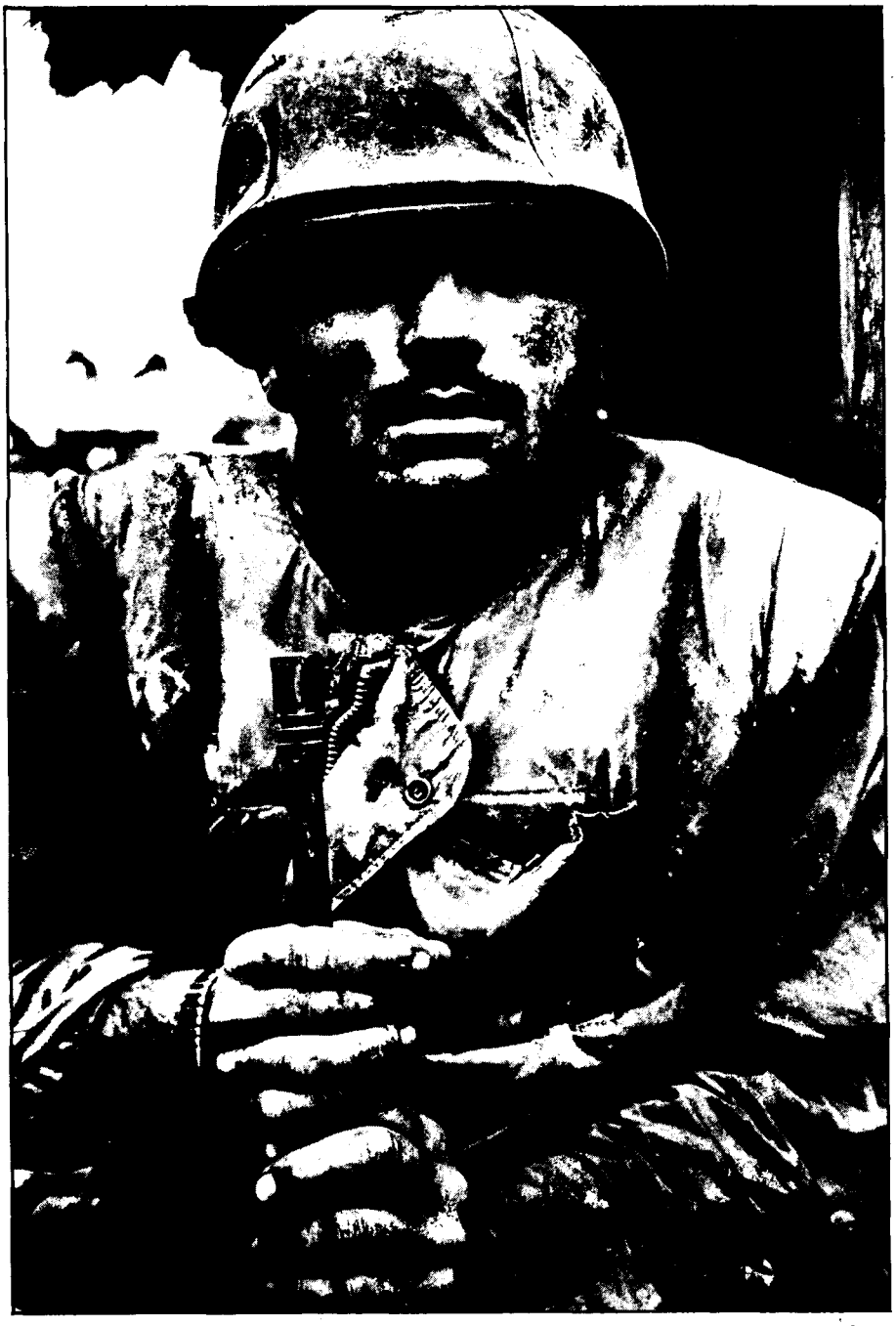
what he does in *Homecoming*, his album of photographs of England. There's a bit of hubris in anyone who can presume to have experienced what those mutilated Cambodians or horribly emaciated Biafrans have suffered. Nonetheless, McCullin's experience of childhood in a very poor, working-class district of London—"my training ground," he calls it—does seem to have been fairly horrendous: an upbringing untended by a dying father and an unaffectionate mother, wartime evacuation to a mean, Bible-thumping family in Lancashire, sleepless nights during the Blitz, a predatory adolescence on the streets. After a stint in art school, McCullin immediately found his photographic subject —life's victims dwelling in the shadow of death. What began as the usual desire for fame became a compulsion as he started dropping in on all of the world's bloodiest battlefields in the 1960s, first for the *Observer*, then for his principal employer ever since, the *London Sunday Times Magazine*. "I used to be a war-a-year man, but now it is not enough," he said in 1967. "I need two a year now. When it gets to be three or four, then I will get worried."

In *Hearts of Darkness*, which is surely unrivaled as a visual record of the world's troubles in these last two decades, McCullin's images betray the intensity of the true war junkie but they stop just short of becoming souvenirs of a death trip. Unlike Vietnam freelancers Sean Flynn (Errol's son) and Tim Page, who experimented with attaching a camera to a soldier's rifle so they could register the victim's expression at the moment of death, McCullin is interested in the effects of war. Death, or its imminence, is present in virtually every one of these images (as well as in the two dozen English pictures in the collection) but the most powerful impression is that of life being conducted furiously, bravely, cravenly, desolately *in extremis*. In McCullin's first picture of a dead man, taken in bloody Cyprus in 1964, the center of attention is not the two bodies lying inside the doorway but a wife of one of the victims who has just entered, frozen in a grimace of shock. The picture is saved from melodrama by the blurry presence of neighbors in the doorway, a shadowy Greek chorus who are as caught up in the widow's moment of discovery as is McCullin.

Pornography is indifferent to the fate of its subjects. McCullin escapes the pornographic by forcing the sufferers



Shell-shocked soldier at the front line in Hue, 1968. Photo by Don McCullin from *Hearts of Darkness*.

to confront him—and us—not just with their suffering but with their feelings of being looked at. In what may be the book's most haunting image, a starving Biafran baby sucks at the dried-up breast of an equally starving mother whose direct look and set jaw convey a greater comprehension of the situation than almost any Madonna and Child has ever conveyed about *hers*. Without sentimentalizing, McCullin evokes the ironic repetition of myth: a grenade-hurling Marine is caught in the posture of an Olympic javelin thrower; the tableau of a towheaded, grim-faced Rhodesian white mercenary and a bare-breasted, black Congolese family recalls all the play-acting in Hollywood movies from the old jungle serials to *Apocalypse Now*. Even the decomposing corpses have a palpable vitality; photographed, like everything else, in heavy black-and-white chiaroscuro reminiscent of the old British master Bill Brandt, they stare out at us or gesture, headlessly, with as much force as the living.

Because of poor reproduction in the Knopf edition, a few of the subjects have lost eye-contact and are thus reduced to figures of generalized pathos. (In the recent McCullin exhibition at the International Center of Photog-

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raphy in New York, all the eyes glowed in the dark.) But this is a collection that transcends its journalistic origins: even greater than McCullin's addiction to suffering is his compulsion to take pictures. "Photography's like an illness," he wrote in *Homecoming*. "It's like a bad dream. It's like the promise of a tremendous high and the promise of an incurable disease. I respect it because I'm afraid of it and I love it." It is of such respect that art is made.

One feels a similar compulsion in the 32-year-old American photojournalist Susan Meiselas, whose pictures of the Nicaraguan revolution were widely published, in *Geo*, *Time*, the *New York Times Magazine*, and *Paris-Match*. A novice at war coverage, Meiselas stole the show with a combination of guts, commitment to the rebel cause, and a sense of life-as-theater that she had earlier demonstrated in an extended self-assignment on a traveling troupe of carnival strippers. Now that they have been organized (chronologically, from just before the revolution to its successful conclusion), her pictures have lost a good deal of immediacy but gained enormously in theatricality.

Color and Meiselas's too-ready eye for the telling contrast are chiefly responsible for the book's artificial glow. Various shades of red (especially the red banner of the rebel Sandinistas) are too deliberately used to heighten visual interest of otherwise unremarkable scenes of revolutionary fervor. A strange purple sky behind two surly National Guardsmen transfers the scene to a cheesy grade-B movie. Meiselas, who won the Overseas Press Club's 1979 Robert Capa Prize for "exceptional courage and enterprise," gets close enough and she superbly captures some street skirmishes in which the young rebels, rifles aloft and cigarettes akimbo, seem to be imitating an old Bogart movie. (Her most moving—and least colorful—image shows a young rebel playing his clarinet to some buddies crouched with rifles behind sandbags.) But she pushes the easy detail too hard: a bad guy sits with his bulging belly in the background while the oppressed, muscular but weary, heaves and sweats under a sack of grain. Drama and excitement are here in abundance but, curiously, the only image of individual personalities caught up in a historical horror show not of their making is Meiselas's shot of the enemy—five National Guardsmen, taken prisoner-of-war, and looking every bit as terrified as everyone else must have felt. In 1910 William James wrote: "Showing war's irrationality and horror is of no effect upon men. The horror makes for fascination." Don McCullin's photographs have, I think, genuine tragic effect. Those of Susan Meiselas, for the most part, only fascinate.

Reconsideration

Daniel Defoe

by Michael Foot

> On any monument worth the name of monument the names of Moll Flanders and Roxana, at least, should be carved as deeply as the name of Defoe. They stand among the few English novels which we can call undisputably great.
>
> —*Virginia Woolf*

Sometime in the summer of the year 1660 (the exact date is unknown), a Cripplegate butcher and his wife brought forth a prodigy—Daniel Defoe, author of almost the first and still the most famous novel ever written. But the world had still to wait more than half a century for *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner*. It was not until his 59th year—in 1719—that Defoe turned his aching hand from journalism and sat down in his Stoke Newington retreat to produce his masterpiece.

Success was instantaneous. "There is not an old woman," wrote one jealous competitor, "that can go to the price of it, but buys the 'Life and Adventures,' and leaves it as legacy with the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' the 'Practice of Piety' and 'God's Revenge Against Murthur' to her posterity." Everybody was snatching for it, even those who sneered. So Defoe swiftly scribbled off a sequel. He went on scribbling at an unaccountable pace for the remaining ten years of his life, churning out newspaper articles, manuals on manners, marriage, economics, and every conceivable topic, with a new novel roughly every 12 months. Three more at least—*Moll Flanders*, *Roxana*, *A Journal of the Plague Year*—must be classed as masterpieces alongside *Robinson Crusoe*. During that last decade, indeed—particularly between the years 1719 and 1722—the genius of Defoe suddenly sprouted into a winter blossom unexampled in the whole range of literature.

No one at the time foresaw his immortality. Alexander Pope recognized the excellence of *Robinson Crusoe*, but his tribute had a touch of patronage. No one believed that Defoe would surpass in fame all the other great men of the age, the Addisons and the Steeles, with Swift alone surviving as his one acknowledged master. Defoe, to his contemporaries, was a Grub Street hack who could never aspire to real literary eminence. And Defoe himself, despite his abounding vanity, half shared the general opinion. The erratic promptings of his old Puritan conscience made him apologize for writing "mere fiction." *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders*, he claimed, were moral tracts, like so much else he had written. He was prouder of his *The True-Born Englishman*, the doggerel verse he had produced 20 years earlier. The fact was he wrote for bread, and *The True-Born Englishman* had sold 40,000 copies, making him for a moment the most widely read poet in the English language.

Even when he died—he was still on the run from his creditors, whom all the royalties from *Crusoe* could not fend off—none of the obituaries mourned the founder of the English novel. On the burial register they got his name wrong: "Mr. Dubow." And the register of St. Giles, Cripplegate, recorded quite simply and falsely: "Mr. Defoe, Gentleman."

Whatever else he was, he was never that. He was by turns a tradesman, an adventurer, a radical pamphleteer and agitator, a reporter, a spy, a gallant crusader, a crawling sycophant, a man accepted in court circles and once the

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Michael Foot is the leader of the British Labour party. This essay is reprinted from his forthcoming *Debts of Honor* (Harper & Row). Copyright © 1980 by Michael Foot.

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confidant of the King, and a man able to plunge with equal zest into the lowest life of London; for months or even years on end his diligent biographers cannot track him down through those murky, labyrinthine lairs. Half his life he seemed to be bombarding ministers with farseeing schemes for new trading projects, for founding new colonies, for military expeditions, for old-age pensions and marine insurance, for establishing academies for education or asylums for the insane. Through the other half he was getting practical acquaintance with "that worst of devils, poverty."

He was a preacher and a moralizer, too, obsessed with the religious controversies of his time. Often he reads like an 18th-century Samuel Smiles. But often again all the smugness is shattered with one sharp blow from the Defoean hammer against hypocrisy.

> To be reduced to necessity is to be wicked; for necessity is not only the temptation, but it is such a temptation as human nature is not empowered to resist.

Who could believe, after this, that some of his biographers would strive to reduce him to a plaster saint, a little bourgeois Bunyan?

Even those two halves of his life were nothing more than fragments; so many other lives as well remain to be explained. Apart from the great merchant sailors themselves, he was the foremost traveler of his age, searching out, as he claimed, every nook and corner of England; he was also the first English writer to discover Scotland, and was well acquainted with Italy, France, and Spain besides. He called himself a native of the universe; and he explored his own city as ruthlessly as Hogarth or Dickens.

He was, too, the most prolific writer of his age, and perhaps of any other. Only when 40 years old did he set out on his full career as a journalist, but then he went to work with a stupendous will and energy. He devised his own shorthand. He established some 60 correspondents or agents all over the country. For nine years he ran his own *Review*, producing the whole of it two or three times a week and still finding time to write for other journals (not omitting to commend their most percipient articles from his own anonymous hand in his own *Review*) and to pour forth a deluge of pamphlets and satirical poems interspersed with full-length histories and biographies. Every night of those hectic years, after his day in the saddle, Defoe must have been writing several thousand words.

He wrote:

> The unhappy People are deluded, are impos'd upon, are fermented, their Spirits disorder'd, *and how*? By raising false Reports, affirming forg'd and barbarous Allegations, raising Scandalous Surmises, and pushing about absurd, ridiculous and incongruous Whymsies among the well-meaning but ignorant People.

Daniel Defoe undertook to turn back the flood single-handed. The father of English journalism, like the later founder of the English novel, didn't care a bit for academic theories about his art. He had to feed his wife and eight children.

Above all, he was at war. He was himself, of course, "a man of peace and reason," set upon from every quarter by devils. How wrathfully he insisted on liberty for himself and how complacently he watched restraints imposed on his licentious competitors. Apart from his clear distinction, he never worried his head about drawing the ineffable line between liberty and license. Doubtless he was right; no one since has discovered where to draw it, either. For 30 years Defoe was in the thick of the journalistic hurly-burly at a time when it raged with more ferocity than in almost any other epoch. In one sense the struggle must have been more wearing for him than most of the others; for he was alone, a member of no party at a time when party affiliations were being drawn as sharply as battle lines. Although a lifelong supporter of the Protestant settlement of 1688, Defoe was never able to enlist wholeheartedly under the flag of its most loyal upholders, the Whigs. Always his unfailing curiosity, ingenuity, and inventiveness were forcing him to stray from the beaten track. All he would be able to claim with certainty on the Day of Judgment, in extenuation of his twists and turns, was that he had

JENNY FISH

Junior High Prom
Brigham City, Utah

Slender Jenny Fish, you danced with your Dad,
A man dressed darkly with a black bow-tie.
He danced much closer than the rest of us did,
Each step cutting a sharp geometry,

His boxstep divvying the dance floor into squares,
As he held your hand high, the silver sleeve
Tensing like a slot machine lever;
And in your face was no pleasure, just nerve

To keep your pride up, to hide your outrage.
Your dress brushed the tops of your low-heeled shoes
While you followed your Dad as if the edge
Of an abyss widened from the slow-slow

Quick-quick of your pace. We boys gawked amazed,
Unbelieving of the golden chain that yoked
Your glasses to your neck, the flat bodice
Of your dress, so unlike the tissue-padded

Poke of other girls. But how you could dance
Compared to our shambling, how darkly male
Your father looked, as your passion grew dense
And seemed to light your face against the cool

Hard blackness of his suit. None of us dared
For long to watch the turns he would exact,
And, as I remember, I was scared
Before that bleak paternal fact,

Whose every step was a command
Obeyed with furious precision,
As above you, in a fist, your twining hands
Clenched with draconian affection.

Tom Sleigh

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never actually been a Tory; was he not one of the first of English writers to explain the origin of those party labels and had he not further gleefully explained how the nicknames served their purpose "till at last the word Tory became popular, and it stuck so close to the party in all their bloody proceedings, that they had no way to get it off"?

Defoe was, in fact, sent to Newgate Prison and made to stand in the pillory by the highest of high Tory ministers for his satirical pamphlet, "The Shortest Way With Dissenters," which outraged the bishops without comforting the dissenters. But then, within a few years, it seemed that, for all his disavowals of the horrific charge, he was content to do the bidding of a Tory ministry. The suspicion grew that he was not merely a hack, but a treacherous paid hack at that. The suspicion was well founded, although we have had to wait until the archives were opened to clinch it. In Newgate, Defoe's spirit wilted.

> I agreed to give the Court No Trouble but to plead Guilty to the Indictment, Even to all the Adverbs, the Seditiously's, the Maliciously's and a Long Rhapsody of the Lawyers et Ceteras; and all this upon promises of being used Tenderly.

The man who got him out was Robert Harley. Harley, like Defoe, was a middle-of-the-roader, but he became more and more encoiled in the maneuvers of the Tories and lived to be the head of the most explicitly Tory administration which Britain had yet known; indeed, the first man in history to be called prime minister in the parlance of the day. This was another piece of English history which Defoe helped to make; the term had first been used in one of his letters to Harley. Defoe was ready to serve his hero with uncritical devotion. "Intelligence," he wrote, "is the Soul of all Publick Business." He showed an incredible assiduity in supplying it. "If you'll allow the Vanity of the Expression, *If I were a Public Minister*, I would if Possible kno'what Every body said of me." Harley, it seemes, was the first politician who, with Defoe's help, paid proper attention to his press cuttings.

It might have been thought that all Defoe's other multitudinous activities were enough. He was a merchant as well as a journalist, dealing at one time and another in bricks, tiles, hosiery, cheese, oysters, and heaven knows what else and bankrupting himself to the tune of £17,000 at the age of 30. But in his busiest decade, when he worked for Harley and wrote his *Review*, he was also secret agent and propagandist-in-chief for the man who had saved him from prison and might still save him from his creditors. For this chosen Prime Minister he performed all the duties now severally discharged by Downing Street Public Relations Officers, Durrant's press cutting agency, the research students of the Central Office and the leading writers of the *Daily Telegraph*.

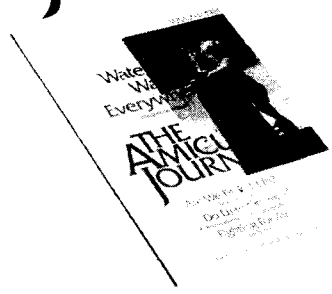
Small wonder that his fellow practitioners in Grub Street pursued him with a special venom. One of the ablest, Abel Boyer—as a journalist and historian quite a match for Defoe himself—ripped aside the mask at every available opportunity. Defoe, the man of moderation, retaliated by calling Boyer a sodomite. The daggers were out in those last years of the queen and the early years of the new king.

DEFOE stooped or was driven to the depths. Switching back his allegiance to the Whigs, he was ready to be assigned by the government spies of a Tory newspaper, there to pass himself off as a Jacobite, doctor the editorials in the government interest, and play the informer against his unsuspecting editor. "Thus I bow in the House of Rimmon," said the man who had once so bravely, in his dissenting youth, marched out to fight under the green banners of "King Monmouth" at Sedgemoor, challenged the silly boasts of racial superiority with his satire *The True-Born Englishman*, and paid for his detestation of religious persecution in the pillory. It seemed a pitiable end, but the end had not quite come.

Those biographers of Defoe who try to wipe away the dirt from his political apostasies and subterfuges cannot adequately explain the glorious flowering of his final years. The miracle of Defoe remains his sudden and belated mastery of a new form of writing in *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders*. The world would not have had either if their creator had not been forced by the screw of money and politics from desperation to dishonor. If Swift had never descended into the mire of English politics, *Gulliver's Travels* would never have been written. Defoe never achieved Swift's corrosive indignation and contempt for the conventional thought of his day. But he learned enough to take the edge off his complacency and transform the self-righteous polemicist into a great novelist.

The jaunty, inquisitive, bubbling, self-

THE AMICUS JOURNAL



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confident, moralizing bourgeois adventurer, which is the face Defoe so often presents, had also seen with his own eyes and knew in his own heart how relentless the devil of poverty could be. Like Moll, if not so frequently, he had yielded to temptation. Once he turned to fiction he could tell the whole truth; all the half-lies and the devious cheatings and devices he had felt compelled to employ in his journalistic career enabled him to do it with a special relish.

Robinson Crusoe was a moral tract in a way, but not in the way that Defoe tried to commend it to his prudish public. If anyone wants to see how an incipient agnostic in a religious age tries not to shirk while still camouflaging his doubts, let him study Crusoe's lame efforts to make Man Friday a good Protestant. And yet *Robinson Crusoe*, despite all its marvelous invention and suspense, is not the finest of his works. As the best of his biographers, Mr. James Sutherland, has suggested, there is more of Defoe in *Moll Flanders* than in any other of his characters. Here he returns to the radicalism of his youth. Once in his young days he wrote a pamphlet called "The Poor Man's Plea," some passages of which could have been written by a Leveller around the campfires of Cromwell's army. Here, in *Moll Flanders*, the Poor Man's Plea is heard again; even more the Poor Woman's Plea, for Moll Flanders is also a feminist tract, justifying the ways of woman to God and man.

"There are more thieves and rogues made by that prison of Newgate, than by all the clubs and societies of villains in the nation." Moll was born in Newgate; she ought to know. She knows much else besides.

> She is always married too soon who gets a bad husband and she is never married too late who gets a good one; in a word, there is no woman, deformity or bad reputation excepted, but if she manages well may be married safely one time or another; but if she precipitates herself, it is ten thousand to one she is undone.

If anyone could doubt that moral embedded in this most immoral of tracts, *Roxana* came a few years later to clinch the case even more impudently.

But, most of all, *Moll Flanders* displays the art, the insight, the mind, the humor—a quality which he shows only in occasional flashes—the unquenchable optimism amid despair and disgrace of Defoe himself. We are told in the preface:

> When a woman, debauched from youth, nay, even being the offspring of debauchery and vice, comes to give an account of all her vicious practices, and even to descend to the particular occasions and circumstances by which she first became wicked, and of all the progressions of crime which she ran through in three score years, an author must be hard put to it to wrap it up so clean as not to give room, especially for vicious readers, to turn it to his disadvantage.

However, the fact underlined in that superb Defoean sentence is that at last Defoe did not feel the need to wrap it all up. The truth he had bottled up within himself for so long poured out in golden spate.

Prodigious Life

The Sage of Monticello (Jefferson and His Times, Volume 6) by Dumas Malone

(Little, Brown; $19.95)

When Thomas Jefferson's favorite granddaughter married Joseph Coolidge of Boston, her luggage was taken north in a ship that went down at sea. Jefferson, typically, did not care about the clothes or furniture that perished, just about her records: "The documents of your childhood, your letters, correspondencies, notes, books, &c, &c, all gone! And your life cut in two, as it were, and a new one to begin, without any records of the former." There is an echo, here, of Jefferson's own sense of loss when his first library, with all his notes, was consumed by fire in 1770. He was a man who wanted to seize every minute of life and put it on paper. The coldly methodical records he kept in dozens of areas are warmed for us when we realize how urgent was the need to keep his life from being "cut in two" again, stretches of personal history forgotten.

Dumas Malone, in his last volume of his noble biography, takes us into Jefferson's study in Monticello, with its books stacked everywhere, document presses lined up under each window. At times—before the sale of 6,500 books to the Library of Congress—this side of the home must have looked more like a storehouse of corporate records than the airy Georgian retreat we see today. The man had a mania for records, which poses a challenge to the modern editors of his papers, who have bravely stumbled up to his first year as secretary of state, with decades still to go before the series is completed. Malone had to travel ahead of that publication project, mastering the extensive Jefferson writings in their various repositories. And, since at times it seems that Jefferson knew everybody and everything in his own world, Malone had to master the literature around all the figures who dealt with him as fellow scholars, architects, politicians, and educators. The task was staggering. I do not see how Malone could accomplish it at all, much less do it with such style and balance. But, for that matter, I do not see how Jefferson had time to live the life it took Malone three decades to narrate. Jefferson somehow crammed the equivalent of four or five productive lifetimes into his own eight decades of creative observation.

This last volume deals with the 17 years after Jefferson retired from the presidency. They should have been peaceful years of retirement and contemplation, and Jefferson sometimes represents them that way. He claimed to have given up newspapers and returned to the Roman authors, to their distilled wisdom: "When the decays of the age have enfeebled the useful energies of the mind, the classic pages fill up the vacuum of *ennui*, and become sweet composers to that rest of the grave into which we are all sooner or later to descend." That sentence, written when he was 76, is a fine example of Jefferson's style, his sheer witchery with words—and also of his ability to fool himself. His retirement, as Malone shows in heartbreaking detail, was busy with catastrophes, personal and political. His house was thronged with feuding kinsmen, his nights tortured with increasing debts, his hopes for his country darkened year by year.

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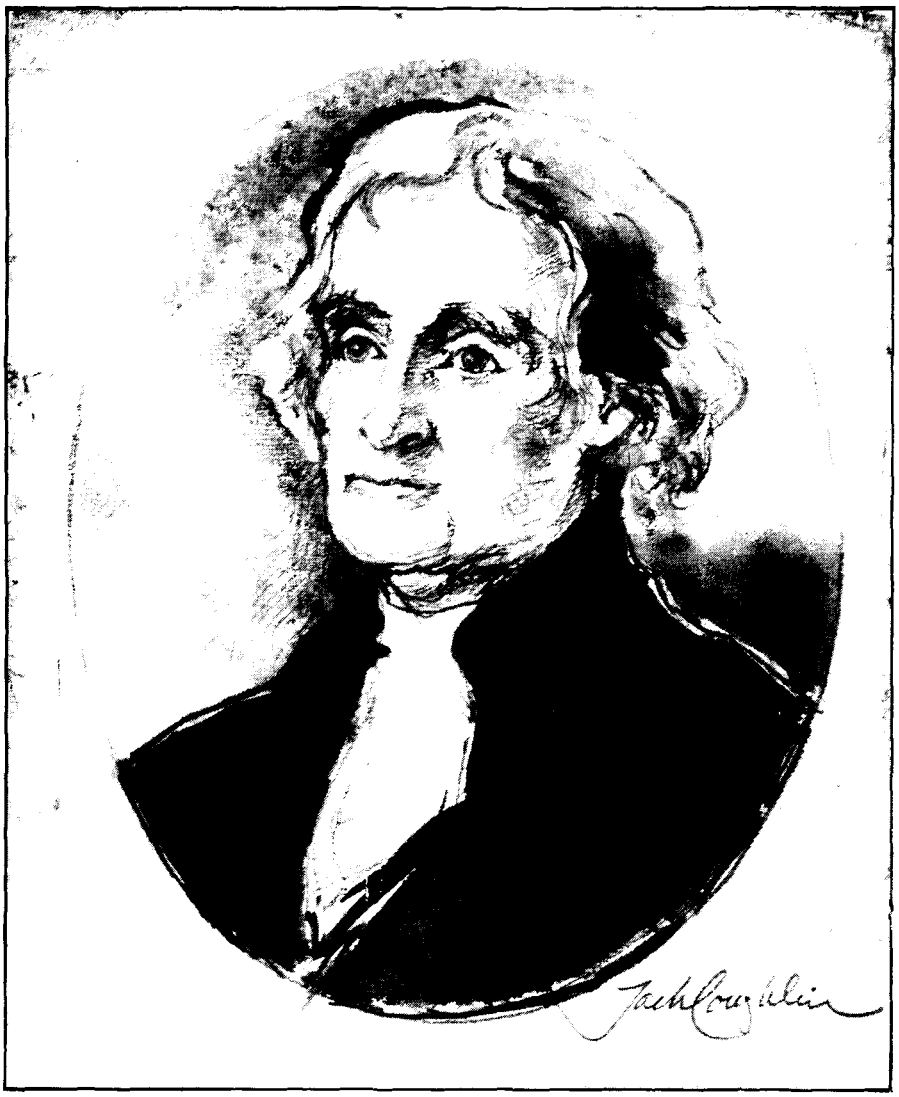

Thomas Jefferson by Jack Coughlin for *The New Republic*

Even his great triumph of these years—the establishment of the University of Virginia—came only after years of disappointment and defeat. The state legislature denied him money; religious fanatics blocked his major appointment to the faculty; and even his friend General Cocke, living in the Palladian "great house" at Bremo, said that "the temper of the [Virginia] House ought to be an admonition to the Old Sachem that the state has had enough of his buildings." The struggle over the Missouri Compromise so embittered Jefferson that he united with his former enemy John Randolph, and with John Taylor, in a narrow regionalism that made black slavery the necessary price for white freedom:

> For if Congress once goes out of the Constitution to arrogate a right of regulating the condition of the inhabitants of the States, its majority may, and probably will, next declare that the conditions of all men within the United States shall be that of freedom; in which case all the whites south of the Potomac and Ohio must evacuate their States, and most fortunate those who can do it first.

Or, as he put it more graphically to John Adams, "are our slaves to be presented with freedom and a dagger?" Haunted by a fear that the federalists had returned under new guises and captured all the north, Jefferson recommended his university as the means to keep southerners free from contamination at Harvard or Yale. He wrote John Taylor: "These seminaries are no longer proper for Southern or Western students. The signs of the times admonish us to call them home." And, to make sure that the poison did not creep into southern textbooks, Jefferson tried to give his students their Hume in censored version.

Yet, while he narrowed his politics in these declining years, he maintained a sunny universalism of thought and unshakable hope for the progress of science. He is a man of endless contradictions; Malone notes often in the final volume the exaggerations of praise or blame indulged in his correspondence, a sweeping use of superlatives that made Henry Adams say Jefferson put himself in peril every time that he took up the pen. He was quick to declare any person or book the best or worst of its kind; and he delivered his judgments in a way that, to quote Adams again, made him "a martyr to the disease of omniscience."

What is one to make of Jefferson's vast output, so many parts of it in conflict with each other? Fortunately, Malone indulges no psychobiographical fads of the sort that will date other biographies of our time, making their various subjects all bear a suspicious resemblance to Erik Erikson's Martin Luther. In fact, some feel Malone leans too far the other way, making few judgments of his own. And when he does explain, he is accused of defending his hero. This is a suspicion that must be faced whenever a man spends much of his own life in service to another's memory. Macauly described the inevitable temptation in his essay on Pitt:

> Almost every mechanical employment, it is said, has a tendency to injure some one or other of the bodily organs of the artisan. Grinders of cutlery die of consumption; weavers are stunted in their growth; smiths become blear-eyed. In the same manner almost every intellectual employment has a tendency to produce some intellectual malady. Biographers, translators, editors, all, in short, who employ themselves in illustrating the lives or writings of others, are peculiarly exposed to the *Lues Boswelliana*.

Malone did, indeed, show a few defensive moments in the volume preceding this last one. That dealt with Jefferson's least glorious period, his second term as president, the time when he most clearly revealed what Leonard Levy calls his "dark side." But with that minor exception, Malone has heroically resisted the urge to defend rather than describe his man. In this volume especially, he traces the growing lack of realism in Jefferson's finances and politics. With Micawber's own confidence that "something will turn up," Jefferson piled shaky debt on shaky debt, till he died owing far more than his holdings could realize.

There was always a tendency for Jefferson's optimism, that bright Enlightenment trait, to lose touch with reality. Having decided that Americans should win the revolution, he was content that

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they would, and went about his scholarly life, contributing little, even as governor of Virginia, to the arbitrament of arms. He evaded the moral problem of slavery by reflecting that the progress of reason would wean men from such cruelty in time. It was this optimism that led Jefferson to his moments of panicky excess, as in the Burr case. Since he believed in the progress of reason, any regress must be the result of conspiracy. The man who was interested in almost everything else showed little curiosity about the problem of evil—a matter he dismissed as "metaphysics." This provides the main note of contrast with John Adams in their rich correspondence during these final years. Malone notes that Jefferson wrote more diplomatically than Adams, and did not engage the latter on some of his more deeply rooted prejudices. Faced with unpleasantness, he changed the subject. This gives a kind of thinness to Jefferson's versatility. He turned easily to this or that, confident that all was well in the larger scheme of things. Adams was not so sure. He had a tragic sense, the lack of which was the most serious of Jefferson's deficiencies.

Malone refers constantly, in this last volume, to Jefferson's optimism, often criticizing it. Yet, by an understandable paradox, he finds optimism the most admirable thing in him as well. Jefferson rose every morning to a world bright with promise of new things. That explains his ability to labor long hours bringing a university into being while his own financial world was crashing about his ears. His generosity to friends, his exaggeration of other people's merits (as well as villainy), his trust that all the records he was keeping would serve mankind in the hands of posterity, his preservation of life's precious moments on paper, the pride in his own age's achievements—all these aspects of his enormous contribution to our national life came from a dazzling optimism that could blind as well as enlighten. His wisdom and his folly were inevitably paired, in a way that makes the folly almost lovable.

Jefferson can be justly treated only *in extenso*. If the impression he leaves is a bit scattered, that is no accident. The man covered so much ground, lived so many lives in one lifetime, because he did not pause to stare into abysses. Henry Adams, Malone points out, was often unfair to Jefferson; but he had a shrewd understanding of him nonetheless. When Adams wrote that "Jefferson's writings may be searched from beginning to end without revealing the whole measure of the man," or that "Jefferson would be painted only touch by touch, with a fine pencil," he was describing the very biography we now possess—one that imposes no artificial unity, probes for no fictitious depths, makes no anachronistic claims. The work has "old fashioned" virtues that make it escape the current fashions, and will allow it to outlive them.

Garry Wills

Garry Wills's book, *The Kennedy Imprisonment*, will be published next February by Little, Brown.

From Loneliness to Communion

Early Auden
by Edward Mendelson

(Viking; $20)

The current literary business has few practitioners more assiduous than the 35-year-old Edward Mendelson, W. H. Auden's extremely intelligent executor, bibliographer, editor, and critic. For years he has busied himself in Auden's posthumous service, producing a bibliography; an anthology of Auden's essays and reviews; new editions of the *Collected Poems* and the *Selected Poems*; and *The English Auden*, a collection of Auden's production in verse and prose before he left England in 1939. And now here is what is virtually a critical companion to *The English Auden*, a study not just of Auden's work from 1927 to 1939 but of literary modernism and Auden's relation to it. Lest we imagine that Mendelson may be ready to flag or fail, or even rest for a bit, we are assured that a concluding volume, *Later Auden*, is in preparation. And the best thing is that all Mendelson's work, from the establishment of texts to their interpretation, is well done. This book, virtually an intellectual history of the 1930s with Auden at its center, is rich and suggestive in its generalizations, resourceful in its scholarship, and precise in its readings of Auden's work. And it is discriminating: Mendelson recognizes immediately when Auden writes badly and speculates on the reasons, usually Auden's taking a position not fully understood or believed, or allowing himself to camp up serious things.

Although *Early Auden* is pinned to the main events of Auden's life, it is a critical rather than a biographical enterprise, and it is impossible to imagine that Mendelson is not saving lots of good biographical stuff for an ultimate big life. This book conducts the reader through Auden's serial intellectual enthusiasms and desires, all the way from his early fascinations with geology and mining engineering to Anglicanism, with stops on the way at Freud, *agape*, and collectivism. The psychological pattern Auden followed was one from loneliness to communion. Beginning in isolation, he arrived finally at sociableness in the largest sense. His early work features retreats across borders or down mines or outré incarnations in such figures as hawks pitilessly scrutinizing the earth from great heights, strangers, spies, and helmeted (and, in those days, goggled and thus both anonymous and sinister) airmen. He felt anxious and guilty about his homosexuality and frustrated by contradictions. Inner unity was the first object of his search. His quest for "healers" brought him to Freud and, as Mendelson says, "Auden was the first imaginative writer in English to take Freud seriously—Lawrence dismissed him, Joyce derided him, everyone else ignored him. . . ." But "the trouble with Freud," Auden noted, "is that he accepts conventional morality as if it were the only one." Keep looking.

A mystical experience, or something very like one, in 1933 offered him insight into the root cause of the contemporary fragmentation, the absence of love (*caritas*, not lust), and as Mendelson says, "He . . . now acknowledged that there were problems more serious than solitary neurosis. . . ." The enemy was now late-romantic subjectivism, and the modern mess was a reflection of "the failure of the romantic conception of personality." As Mendelson observes:

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> The romantic personality, Auden suggests [in *The Orators* especially], having lost a unified community, tries to compensate with its isolated will to power; but as a result it forfeits unity and power together. The romantic hero, for all his claims to autonomy, begins by assuming his own unfreedom: he knows that the isolation he enjoys was caused by historical or psychological fate, not by his own choice. . . . Trying to be self-creating and self-sufficient, he invariably finds he must take some heroic predecessor as a model. Seeking to become himself, he becomes a version of someone else. From Don Quixote onward, the imaginative hero has proved after all to be a literalist: he gets it all out of books, from Milton's Satan or Homer's Ulysses.

Seeking community, Auden found it to some degree, Mendelson nicely perceives, in "received meters" and inherited verse forms, phenomena recognizing "the unbroken patterns that persist in human time." In making this point, Mendelson analyzes "A Summer Night" ("Out on the lawn I lie in bed,/ Vega conspicuous overhead") and commits the only real oversight I've found in his whole book by saying that Auden's stanza here is "a modified Burns stanza." Actually it's significantly the stanza of Christopher Smart's *A Song to David* (1763), a poem which visits Auden's in other ways as well, not least in its canvass of the particulars of the Creation (moon, flowers, lion, bird, sun, gardens, creepers, tree, sea, wheat, tigress) as components of the joy it celebrates. And once we're alerted to Auden's awareness of Smart, we see their kinship elsewhere, in "The Creatures," say, or in Auden's rhetorical instinct for prayer and praise, even in his waggish, secular moments ("Sir, no man's enemy"). There's an echo of Smart's point, that praise is what creatures and poets and people should be doing all the time, when Auden, addressing not God but the spirit of W. B. Yeats, adjures it to "Teach the free man how to praise."

From his beginning Auden was accustomed to begin all over as each of his eagerly grasped programs for overcoming isolation and hatred failed him in turn. His transit to America in 1939 was a further search, not a pusillanimous flight. "He told me the other night," says Edmund Wilson in 1946, "that he supposed he'd come to America in order to become the good cosmopolitan."

> In fundamental ways he doesn't belong in that London literary world—he's more vigorous and more advanced. With his Birmingham background and his early training as a mining engineer—in spite of having been to . . . Oxford—he is in some ways more like an American. He is really extremely tough—cares nothing about property or money, popularity or social prestige—does everything on his own and alone.

In short, a good American by instinct. Later his kinetic intellect will bring him to theology, and ultimately to the church, but that moment of the odyssey will be the matter of Mendelson's final volume.

And speaking of Auden as an American, let me clarify a point I made a while ago in these pages. Positioning Auden in a hierarchy of gentility, I suggested that if T. S. Eliot was a model of quasi-British literary gent at the "top"—austere, prudent, respectable—and W. Somerset Maugham a type of the cad at the bottom—dishonest, mean-minded, insecure—Auden was halfway between, identifiable as a "half-gent." Immediately abusive cards and letters poured in, and I even had an anonymous phone call that verged on the threatening. These objections came largely from self-doubting homosexuals who assumed that I was tut-tutting at Auden's sex life. Not at all. I was trying to suggest how very different in character and personality he was from Eliot, who carefully made himself into a certain kind of Englishman just as Auden carefully made himself into a certain kind of American. It would be impossible to imagine the aging Eliot getting drunk nightly at Christ Church, Oxford, and asserting roundly at the table of the Senior Common Room that "of course everyone pees in his bath." Equally like a half-gent is Auden in the act of insisting that guests visiting his toilet employ no more than two sheets of tissue. That seems short on dignity, not to mention magnanimity, both of which I take to be signs of the gent. In this country most literary people are half-gents (thank God, many will say), and Auden fitted in beautifully.

As a poet Auden sounds sometimes like Yeats, sometimes like Ogden Nash. But Mendelson helps us see his affinity with Byron and even Horace as a civic poet. He recognized, says Mendelson, "that the literary language he inherited from his modernist predecessors had rendered practical social issues invisible

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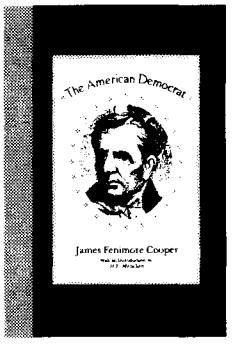

The American Democrat

By James Fenimore Cooper

Introduction by H. L. Mencken

An examination of democratic institutions in the United States by one of America's first important novelists. Cooper was an intellectual aristocrat who defended representative democracy, but warned of the dangers of extreme social egalitarianism. Hardcover $9.00, Paperback $4.00.

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by assimilating all experience into a private introspective order." That defines Auden's difference from the Georgians as well as his difference from Wallace Stevens. And it points to Auden's unique achievements, the permanent poems no one—*no one*—else could have written: "Musée des Beaux Arts," "The Unknown Citizen," "Epitaph on a Tyrant," "September 1, 1939," "In Memory of W.B. Yeats," "As I Walked Out One Evening," "Victor Was a Little Baby." As he civically says in *Letter to Lord Byron*:

> To me Art's subject is the human clay,
> And landscape but the background to a torso,
> All Cézanne's apples I would give away
> For one small Goya or a Daumier.

"Even more than with most poets," says John Bayley, "there is a gap between Auden and his critics, or rather between the way his poetry works and the things that we find to say about it." Auden's is a poetry of human limitations, and in the current atmosphere, when criticism has assumed such inordinate pseudophilosophical tasks (or put on such monstrous quasi-scientific airs, whichever way you like to put it), it takes a rare critic, a critic of this world (Randall Jarrell, where are you?) to deal with a poetry of the ordinate. Mendelson is a civic critic, whose means and whose voice—learned, rational, measured, calm, sympathetic—are beautifully appropriate to the task at hand.

Paul Fussell

The Education of a Communist

Within the Whirlwind
by Eugenia Ginzburg
translated by Ian Boland
introduction by Heinrich Böll

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $17.50)

Near the end of this beautiful and moving story of a life in Soviet prisons and forced labor camps, when the author has served out her term and has been released but is threatened again with arrest, she addresses a kind of apology to the reader: "I feel guilty vis-à-vis the reader. This is so monotonous. Here we are again awaiting arrest! Not another round of these nightmares!" She then assures us that though her readers may be bored at the endless iteration of horror, she herself was not: "the second arrest is far more terrifying than the first, and the third is worse than the second. Yes; by the time you have tottered as far as the seventh circle of hell the first seems utter paradise." But of course we are not bored for a moment, even though we know the essentials of the grim labor camp story from Solzhenitsyn's voluminous *Gulag*, Shalamov's *Kolyma Tales*—and indeed from the author's own first volume, *Journey Into the Whirlwind*, published in 1967. The earlier volume tells of her arrest in 1937 and describes the first years of her ten-year imprisonment on a charge of "participation in a Trotskyist terrorist counter-revolutionary group."

The present volume tells of the remaining years of her sentence; of her love for Anton Walter, a fellow prisoner who became her second husband; of her own release while he still had more years to serve; and of her efforts to build a home near Anton's prison camp, an island of family intimacy always threatened by the possibility of another arbitrary arrest and further misery.

Together the two books place Ginzburg securely in the company of outstanding Russian autobiographers, writers who are able to transform the rude facts of personal history into artistic structures. There is a dimension of personal tragedy in Ginzburg's book absent from many other memoirs: for her, the 18 years in hell were an expiation, though not for the crimes they charged her with. She tells us in her first volume that at the time of her first arrest in 1937 she had "never had the slightest doubt as to the rightness of the party line"; she would have "died" for the party; she supported fervently "the programs of industrialization and collectivization"; and on the eve of her own arrest she was dutifully repeating, as a party activist and educator, the fabricated official account of Kirov's assassination. The sadistic interrogators and jailers who horrified her in 1937 already had long practice in tormenting and murdering people: peasants uprooted from the land and charged as "kulaks," suspected mensheviks and "wreckers," "Trotskyites," not to speak of suspected "speculators," "diversionists," "bourgeois nationalists," and many other "enemies." As a a loyal supporter of the party, she and others like her bore a heavy share of blame for all the innocent victims, and in the chapter of the latest volume entitled "Mea Culpa" the author acknowledges the operation in her life of a mysterious justice:

> These two words are easy to hear during sleepless periods, when you look back on your life with loathing, when you tremble and curse. When you can't sleep, the knowledge that you did not directly take part in the murders and betrayals is no consolation. After all, the assassin is not only he who struck the blow, but whoever supported evil, no matter how: by thoughtless repetition of dangerous political theories; by silently raising their right hands; by faint-heartedly writing half-truths. *Mea Culpa* . . . and it occurs to me more and more frequently that even eighteen years of hell on earth is insufficient expiation of the guilt.

The vivid portraits of prisoners she met fill in many details of the tragedy. The choice of victims and allotment of sentences seemed random and irrational; she compares attempts to figure out the Gulag system to "playing at chess with an orangutan." Yet a kind of rough pattern does emerge from the evidence she gives. The political prisoners accused of the most heinous crimes against the state and the Russian people tended to come from the Soviet intellectual establishment of the 1920s and 1930s: a famous sinologist, who hanged herself in the camp; a highly placed German Communist from Berlin; a former professor of language and literature; the daughter of the once famous critic and publisher Voronsky; an authority on Mandelshtam; the artist Vera Shukhaeva, who knew Modigliani and Léger; and many others. The prisoners tended to be former members of the Soviet privileged class (when Ginzburg went to Moscow to be interrogated concerning possible criminal Trotskyist connections she lived in a downtown luxury hotel and was taken to her sessions in a chauffeured limousine); their jailers

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The Inertia of Fear and the Scientific Worldview by Valentin Turchin translated by Guy Daniels

(Columbia University Press; $19.95)

Valentin Turchin, a physicist with a special interest in computer science, was an active and articulate dissident in Moscow for nearly a decade. His name first appeared in *samizdat* documents in the late 1960s at a time when as many as 2,000 people signed petitions on behalf of defendants in political trails. But unlike many of his colleagues who were among the country's most accomplished scientists and whose names also appeared on appeals of that period, Turchin did not retreat into silence once the regime made clear its willingness to exact reprisals.

Instead, he broadened his efforts, writing a letter to *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in defense of Alexander Solzhenitsyn and composing an eloquent plea for democratization—signed by Andrei Sakharov and Roy Medvedev as well—that circulated in 1970. Later he helped to found the Moscow chapter of Amnesty International and served as its chairman until his forced emigration in 1977.

Turchin wrote a much shorter version of this book in 1968. Entitled "The Inertia of Fear," the essay was directed to a specific portion of the country's intelligentsia, the large and ever-growing population of well-trained scientists who abhorred the regime's abuse of power but who were unwilling to join overt protest.

Turchin set out to define the fear that inhibited them in the hope that by exploring "our mangled mentality" he could encourage people to accept their responsibilities as free and sentient human beings. In the early 1970s, the late Andrei Amalrik commented that "even now the regime exists, perhaps not only, but mainly, on the interest from the capital of fear amassed" under Stalin. Turchin agrees, remembering how in the late 1960s so many sympathetic people refused to sign petitions.

For those readers who are looking for a vivid memoir of a Soviet dissident or for a systematic analysis of Soviet society in conventional political terms, *The Inertia of Fear and the Scientific Worldview* will surprise and perhaps disappoint them. Many of Turchin's arguments, on Marxism and socialism, on one-party rule in a partyless system, on the individual's role in post-industrial society, are based on his views as a scientist and are often articulated in the language and logic of systems theory.

Still, Turchin's book remains an eloquent statement of how one highly educated, activist, and courageous Soviet scientist views the problems posed by totalitarianism and the growth of technology. Turchin, for example, pursues the audacious idea that Soviet society, rather than seek reform along the lines of a parliamentary democracy, should nurture a unique type of one-party system, what he terms "a partyless system with a single political network." He proposes that "political liberties be separated from the struggle for political power among parties representing the interests of large social classes."

Turchin suggests that science offers an appropriate model. According to him, a single political network could take on the characteristics of a scientific-educational system, replacing the struggle for power with a "striving for truth." Then this network can "serve as the basic instrument of social integration, supplying cadres for the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government." Turchin concedes that various factions would still exist under his proposed system, but with a change in goals and adequate guarantees for political liberties, the struggle for power of a multiparty system can be relinquished for the "struggle for ideas" of a partyless system.

Turchin recognizes the similarity between what he has in mind and the theory behind Soviet political rule. Although his proposal is an elegant, utopian solution to this impasse in Soviet society, it ignores the contradiction between political freedom and a monolithic state. Like Alexander Solzhenitsyn, whose disdain for parliamentary democracy is well documented, Turchin's ideas reflect a fundamental mistrust of conventional politics. But the politics of an open democratic system, however corrupt or misused they may be, cannot simply be suspended, in the name of truth or order, without civil liberty being dissolved.

Turchin is on firmer ground when he discusses the role of scientists in their struggle with Soviet officialdom. Here Western scientists need to pay close attention. Turchin makes clear what everyone knows: that only scientists who conform to party controls are permitted to participate in exchange programs. So when Western scientists receive their Soviet colleagues, especially those who actually signed statements denouncing academician Andrei Sakharov or Professor Yuri Orlov, they are compromising their own integrity and reinforcing a political system that makes free scientific inquiry impossible to pursue.

Joshua Rubenstein

Joshua Rubenstein is New England coordinator of Amnesty International, USA, and the author of *Soviet Dissidents* (Beacon Press).

were almost all recently and barely educated peasants or workers, moral illiterates full of hatred for these alien types who had once "eaten caviar by the spoonful" in hungry and miserable Russia.

Ginzburg is a superb observer and narrator, and the method of her art is to fashion scenes and characters charged with symbolic meaning. The slave-labor system violated the spirit of law and justice, but its administrators were fanatical sticklers for the "letter." This book contains many examples of fixation on the external form, and their meaning reaches well beyond the camp system itself. Floors must be kept shiny and clean in the filthy and suffocating barracks housing the children of convicts: "the whiteness of the floor was the one criterion of hygiene." A peasant woman who became a doctor in the era of women's liberation and proletarian advancement is very proud of her "permanent wave and her magical ability to write prescriptions in Latin." For every death in the hospital where she worked the documentation must be in order. At the top of each page instead of "History of the Illness" one should have written "History of a Murder," but no one had the courage for that. The ultimate symbol of literal reliance on the letter is

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the camp commandant Timoshkin stubbornly teaching himself to write so he can compose official documents: "When it came to doing the written work in his correspondence course he used to drive me crazy with questions as to how to write this or that letter."

The camp system was beyond the law but it set great store by mimicry of legal procedures, and these instances of careful adherence to the "letter" by illiterates tell us much about the Soviet system itself. Ginzburg would not agree with Solzhenitsyn that "Marxist ideology" is responsible for the excesses of inhumanity she records. Nothing in the heads of the policemen, interrogators, commandants, jailers, and guards can possibly be dignified by the word "ideology." Ginzburg exposes for us a set of minds whose philistine prejudice and narrow hatred were supported by "the inertia of set phrases," most of which had no relationship to Marxism.

The minutiae of death and suffering that the author selects for emphasis are often metonymies containing in themselves the whole experience of camp life. The milk provided by the camp mothers lacked nutritive value because it was "acidulous from their grief." When the author was assigned to a poultry farm (a heavenly assignment) she found that the traditionally harmless fowl have been transformed by hunger into violent thugs: "One enormous feathered monster, resembling a Tsarist general, perched on my shoulder, whence he subjected me to insufferable insults." In this country of death an agreeable job was the gravedigger's. It even carried certain privileges, and of course there were tricks to the trade: when the corpses were too many you simply buried them in the snow, and in the spring they would be "borne away with the freshets."

An underlying motif of this book is the persistence of human love in a most unfriendly environment. Wherever men and women are together in the camps, tender relationships appear in spite of inconvenience and the danger of lethal punishment if caught: "you might end up paying for your date with your life." The author falls in love with Anton Walter, a doctor of German ancestry sent to prison because he talked to a foreign scholar who had also talked to someone accused as a Trotskyite terrorist. The history of their affair is love poetry of the first order.

With this volume of her memoirs Eugenia Ginzburg records the completion of a former Communist's spiritual education. Her first volume ended with a pious hymn to the party. In spite of her own suffering, she felt the conviction that after the disgrace of Stalin "the great Leninist truths have again come into their own country and Party." *Within the Whirlwind* ends on a more humble and sober note:

> . . . I want to reveal to the reader the heroine's spiritual evolution, the gradual transformation of a naive young communist idealist into someone who had tasted unforgettably the fruits of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a human being who amid all her setbacks and sufferings also had moments (however brief) of fresh insight in her search for truth. It is this cruel journey of the soul and not just the chronology of my sufferings that I want to bring home to the reader.

Edward J. Brown

Edward J. Brown is professor of Slavic languages and literature at the University of California, Berkeley.

Barred Soul

In the Belly of the Beast Letters from Prison by Jack Henry Abbott

(Random House; $11.95)

This is a disturbing book, and not simply because of its subject matter. It is, to begin with, a trial to read. Half of it consists of baby talk Marxist jabber about the iniquity of our courts, and indeed of our "bourgeois" society generally, and the "inevitability" of the "world proletarian revolution" which will sweep this rot away. No normal person could read this screed with either pleasure or profit. Its only interest is as a symptom of the way rage can disorder even a well-stocked mind.

Disturbing too is the way Mr. Abbott has been taken up by literary lights. The *New York Review of Books* ran several prison letters from Mr. Abbott, and its editor, Mr. Robert Silvers, helped arrange for the publication of this book. This is admirable. However, when Mr. Silvers told *Publishers Weekly* that he "respected [Abbott's] views as serious and well thought out," he was letting his humanitarian feelings steam up his judgment. Serious and well thought-out? I'll bet my subscription to the *New York Review* that if you sent that sophisticated sheet a manuscript containing such views as "This is the most unjust and oppressive country in the whole world, and I'm not going to give any lawyerlike details or comparisons," or such sentences as "The Chinese Communist Party, Mao and the whole country are objectively three separate entities," your well thought-out views would wind up in the crank file. I think Mr. Silvers is rightly impressed by Jack Abbott's writing talent and by the reading he did during the 20 years he spent behind bars, but his respect for Abbott's "views" strikes me as patronizing, a reflex of radical chic.

Norman Mailer has also lent his prestige to Abbott's cause. In a laudatory introduction to this book, Mailer tells us that while he was working on his study of Gary Gilmore, Jack Abbott, then an inmate in a maximum security prison, wrote to him offering expert advice on prison violence. Impressed by Abbott's prose, Mailer wrote back, and a lengthy correspondence ensued, of which this book is a fragment.

In his introduction, Mailer is uneasy with Abbott's crackpot views but hyperbolic about his talent, going so far as to say that if Abbott is released on parole (he just has been, with help from Mailer, Silvers, and Random House), "we may yet have a new writer of the largest stature among us. . . ." I hope he is right, for any reader of these letters must wish Abbott every success. But I suspect he is unintentionally closer to the truth when he compares Abbott to Jerzy Kosinski's Chauncey Gardner, the adulated hero of *Being There*, whose mind was formed exclusively on a dreadful diet of TV. To be sure, Jack Abbott's mind was formed by the likes of Hegel, Kant, Plato, Camus, and Sartre, whom he read in prison in a moving effort to improve on his sixth-grade education.

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Still, the fact remains that, at 37, he has had only nine months' exposure to the world beyond the prison walls since he was 12. As a result, his mind has the style of profundity but pathetically little of the substance. Mr. Abbott is besotted by theory; Chauncey Gardner was stupefied by television. But the true comparison between them lies in the fact that people who should know better traduce their own standards by honoring the "authentic" banality of such innocents with the respect due only to real wisdom.

So here is a book that comes with the endorsement of two prominent intellectuals, and half of it is unreadable rant. It is, as I say, disturbing. But not nearly so disturbing as Jack Abbott's voice. It is a fierce, angry voice, full of hatred and defiance, and it fumes up from a depth of suffered indignity that few of us could imagine, let alone endure. The voice tries to shock. It says: "I have never come into bodily contact with another human being in almost 20 years except in combat; in acts of struggle, of violence." Mr. Abbott writes in the loose way we all do in letters, but his lapses into what Jane Austen called "the never of conversation" leave me in no doubt over the emotional truth of that statement—that all of his adult contacts with other human beings have been violent ones—because this brutal biography is in his voice, in its rage at the powers that have tried to grind him down: the guards, the courts, the society itself.

The ferocity of that voice makes me wonder whether vengeance against society isn't a strong motive in ex-convicts who commit violent crimes. Perhaps they have suffered so cruelly in prison that, once released, they have to strike back for justice's sake and to regain their self-respect. The tragedy is that society is not an abstraction; it's always some poor devil with a wife and kids who will miss him and neighbors who will say what a swell guy he was. Oh, but you have to be a literary kingpin like Mailer to salute, as he did in his notorious essay, "The White Negro," the "existential" daring of the criminal who lashes out at society. Existential daring—this from a man who probably hasn't ridden a subway in 30 years and whose idea of violence is a catty confrontation with Gore Vidal.

But back to Jack Abbott. Even those who believe, as I do, that the role of prison should be to punish, not to rehabilitate, must turn, sickened, from the details of his account: the sadistic guards, "hired by the pound," to whom Abbott will concede no humanity; the "strip cells," the "holes," and the "tanks" where man catches hatred like an incurable disease; the sexual atrocities and humiliations the prisoners inflict on one another, turning what could be a source of comfort into grim gladiatorial encounters. That these outrages take place in federal prisons, not on an Alabama chain gang, is a national disgrace. To judge from Jack Abbott's account, our prisons are concrete jungles where inmates kill—as Abbott did—over trifles; where violence, pitilessness, and guile rule; and where even a herculean effort at self-transcendence like Jack Abbott's must end in moral fanaticism, abstract aridity, and vile views.

Prison, writes Abbott, is a metaphor for the rest of our society; he doesn't realize that only our literary celebrities are allowed to say such foolish things (and our magazines: "Notes from Gulag" is the title the *Nation* gave to its review of Abbott's book). No, prison is not a metaphor. It is its own place, and I hope Abbott holds the national nose in the repulsive particulars of that place as he makes the rounds of the talk shows, drumming up sales for his angry book.

Note: As we go to press, the *New York Times* of July 20 reports that Jack Henry Abbott is wanted for questioning in the fatal stabbing of a man in New York City on July 18.

Jack Beatty

Brief Reviews

Extinction
by Paul and Anne Ehrlich

(Random House; $15.95)

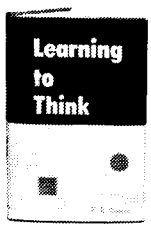
According to *The Global 2000 Report*, as many as one fifth of all living species on earth will perish by the end of the century if the present rate of extinction continues. Wildlife authorities have already conceded partial defeat; they've considered resorting to a campaign to save only those species with the best chances for survival. A myriad of plants and animals, from the famed rhinoceros in Asia and Africa to the lesser known Godley's buttercup in New Zealand, cannot compete with the global assault on their habitats led by miners, developers, and poachers. In *Extinction* Paul Ehrlich, author of *The Population Bomb* and *The End of Affluence*, and Anne Ehrlich, co-author of several ecology books, present a cogent and comprehensive case for the need to protect imperiled species.

Throughout history, appeals to human compassion for other living creatures too often have been dismissed as the maudlin cant of a few visionary zealots. However, there is a powerful argument to be made that man should respect the rights of other forms of life precisely because he has the unchecked power to dominate them, and the Ehrlichs make that case. The "Stewardship Theory" does not preclude all industrial development, the Ehrlichs insist, but it condemns the construction of a dam in Tennessee which is of dubious merit when it will result in the annihilation of an entire race of fish.

Though morality all too often fails to persuade, homocentric, pragmatic reasons will move many people to attend to nature: after all, man derives essential benefits from his environment. A substance produced by a South American plant may replace petroleum as a major energy source. Chemicals from plants are a major ingredient in drugs, especially antibiotics. The Irish potato famine and starvation in underdeveloped countries have shown the hazards of depending on too narrow a range of staple crops. Nonetheless, the human diet continues to consist primarily of no more than 20 types of plants. A rare plant recently discovered in Mexico which can be crossbred with corn and an endangered scrub grass in Israel may help determine the fate of the world's breadbasket. The Ehrlichs use such fascinating examples to illustrate a compelling truth: with every species he eliminates, man risks shortening his own life span.

The current struggle to prevent

LEARNING TO THINK



By E. R. Emmett

This fascinating and readable book shows you how to achieve the most basic goal of education: LEARNING TO THINK.

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further extinction appears both quixotic and ineffectual. Besides urging industrial societies to curb their appetites for depleted natural resources and counseling third world countries to limit the growth of their burgeoning populations, the authors do not map out any detailed strategy. Instead, they extol the virtues of "increasing peoples' awareness," quoting H. G. Wells's dictum that "Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." Before the problem can be solved, people must be convinced it exists; this commendable work will help.

David Seideman

Showing Off in America: From Conspicuous Consumption to Parody Display by John Brooks

(Little, Brown—An Atlantic Monthly Press Book; $12.95)

By the time President Reagan's inauguration had come and gone with a flourish, John Brooks's book was probably too far along on the production line for him to tack on a chapter about that week's lavish displays of affluent consumption. But he may not have been too sorry about that, for those extravagant festivities would not have fit his thesis. Brooks argues that Thorstein Veblen's insights into the invidious drama of conspicuous consumption in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* are still relevant, except that now a note of conscious parody has pranced into our self-displays. In fact, however, parody was one of the few things in scant supply during the inaugural events. Instead, the reigning view was unabashed and straightforward then and has become more so since, as Michael Kinsley has explained: conspicuous entertainment is the natural and appropriate accompaniment to prodigious productivity, the two joys the affluent bring to society—or will if the administration's tax program is passed.

But even during the decade before Reagan's inauguration, parody was not, I think, as much a part of showing off in America as Brooks insists. He's certainly right that society has changed significantly since Veblen wrote; now a majority of Americans, rather than a select class, enjoys substantial leisure, and now "sophistication is at large in the land to an extent that it never has been before." But sophistication does not always express itself in parody, as Brooks himself admits. He grants that ironic display is more likely to be the style among the college educated, and some of his examples are well chosen. *Saturday Night Fever*, a movie about upward mobility in the lower class, appealed to the elite and brought out the flamboyant disco dancer in even bookish types, who of course relished the incongruity. More subtly, Brooks sees through the displays of expertise and of largesse which have made consulting and philanthropy, respectively, boom businesses. No doubt many in those fields see through at least some aspects of their endeavors themselves.

But more often Brooks overstates the degree of conscious parody involved in the displays he discusses. Irony is rarely easy to gauge and often easy to disagree about; it's no surprise that a self-professed expert on the elusive quality should find it lurking in just about every gesture. Certainly Brooks is right that many of the phenomena he treats—blue jeans, sports, diets, telephone tactics—are ironic versions of previous forms of display (roughly: high fashion, religion, corsets, and social etiquette, respectively). But I doubt that most people who wear Vanderbilt jeans to a nice party think they're being "really pretty funny," as Brooks does. And even Brooks is inclined to say that the most conspicuous game of consumption in America right now, real estate, is more suited to tragedy than to parody as far as those involved are concerned. Let's let Veblen have the last word, still apposite to our sophisticated times. He suggested that Americans' invidious proclivities were due not to studied parody but to "a certain prevalent imbalance and derangement of mentality."

Ann Hulbert

Coming:

Irving Howe on

Ignazio Silone's *Fontamara*.

Correspondence, *from page 5*

a greater menace than Pinochet, then by Walzer's reductive analysis, I am an "ideologue" and "corrupt"—or, to borrow a less genteel epithet attached to Jeane Kirkpatrick by Tom Farer in the *New York Review of Books*, I am an "intellectual thug." To analysts like Farer and Walzer, it makes no difference that Pinochet's political prisoners number about 100, while Castro's number in the tens of thousands. A tyrant is a tyrant, right? And I'm constrained by Walzer's implicit point—made explicit by C. S. Lewis—that one cannot quantify human misery by reference to the numbers of those who suffer.

But there remains another point of distinction which impresses thugs like Kirkpatrick and myself—a point that Walzer does not broach in his essay: Pinochet harbors no designs on Bolivia or Peru; Castro, a Soviet puppet, builds a military airstrip in Grenada within easy range of Venezuelan oil fields, promotes instability in Central America, and provides troops to fight anti-Communist rebels in Angola and to suppress Somali malcontents in Ethiopia. The authoritarians, who are motivated by cultural quirks and by their own venality, do not share the imperial ambitions of the totalitarians, who are motivated by a fanatic vision of a new world order. Why do Walzer et al. always ignore this feature of the distinction drawn by the "new cold warriors"?

John R. Dunlap
San Jose, California

To the editors:

Michael Walzer should be praised for unmasking the bankruptcy of Jeane Kirkpatrick's distinction between "totalitarianism" and "authoritarianism" as a useful guide to policy. This kind of self-serving nonsense does little to advance us toward a solution to what may rank as our key foreign policy dilemma: how efficiently to oppose the Soviets without also giving undue aid and comfort to every jackpot and two-penny Napoleon who calls himself "anti-Communist." Walzer nicely points up the complexities, not the least of these being our abiding reverence for life and liberty.

Christopher H. Foreman Jr.
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

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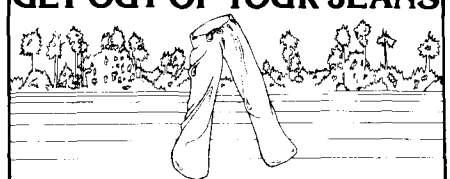

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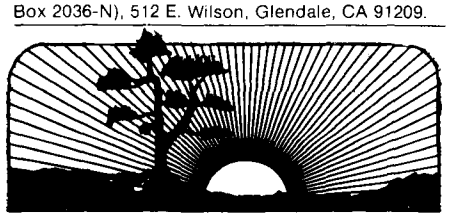

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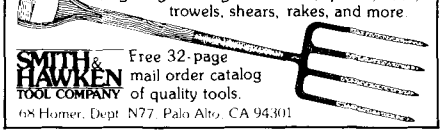

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Washington Diarist

Summer Reading

In the glare of the hot summer sun, the Sunday newspapers somehow seem especially ridiculous. Two weeks ago, squinting at the *New York Times*'s front page, my eyes glided past UNPAID REVENUES COST CITY MILLIONS, MASS KILLINGS RACK SALVADOR, and NATO IS FACING PARALYSIS OF WILL, EXPERTS CONTEND, and settled without enthusiasm on a long profile of Sandra O'Connor, the Supreme Court nominee. The crucial passage:

> The review is far from complete, but the woman, public and private, who has so far emerged from an examination of those records, and from conversations with friends, colleagues and adversaries, is by political instinct, judicial philosophy, economic standing and personal temperament . . .

Yes? Yes?

> . . .both similar to and different from the constituency that elected Ronald Reagan President.
>
> Judge O'Connor emerges as a sometime conservative with a moderate, even progressive streak, a determined woman but not a dogmatic one. She is wealthy but not rich, intellectually curious but not adventuresome, malleable and yet traditional.

So the mystery of Sandra O'Connor is solved. She's a conservative moderate with a progressive streak, wealthy but not rich. Is there any more lemonade?

Then, last Sunday, the *Times Magazine* had its 45th consecutive cover story on China. The magazine's editors can hardly be blamed for this one, since the author was *Times* executive editor A. M. Rosenthal, not an easy man to reject. ("Dear Mr. Rosenthal: Thank you for submitting your work to the *New York Times Magazine*. We receive many fine manuscripts, most of them on China. Unfortunately, we cannot publish them all, although we try. Please pardon the use of this form letter. . . .") Rosenthal's special angle was that he had never been to China before. Remarkable? Well, yes and no. Frequent references to the billion people who live in China make it all too easy to overlook the three billion or so who don't live in China, many of whom never even visit there. Rosenthal seems to think it takes some extraordinary act of will to avoid visiting China. Where did he find the strength to resist for so long? Apparently unlike everyone who ever visited China before him, Rosenthal has a "deep repugnance for totalitarianism of the left or the right," explained an ad in the *Times* promoting Rosenthal's essay. This bizarre prejudice is what gives the essay its dramatic tension. As the ad put it:

> How does this 'new China hand' separate the empathy he feels for the country and its people after just a few weeks with his decades of distaste for totalitarianism and authoritarianism?

Are you dying of suspense? Well, I could summarize the piece for you. But that would be telling.

"No paths lead to Phillip Johnson's study. It stands by itself, serene and white against the dark green trees that make a semicircle behind it. . . ." So begins a shocking exposé in last Sunday's *Washington Post* on the working conditions of our nation's most fashionable architect. Many clear violations of OSHA standards are reported. "'You realize there's no path to the study,' said Johnson. 'You're supposed to make a pilgrimage to get there. It's a way of dissociating yourself from everything else. I walk there to work even if it's raining or snowing.' Not only is there no path, there's also no bath, or telephone. 'Nothing is allowed to intrude,' Johnson explained. 'I leave all those things behind me when I go to the study.'" All of us who have dedicated our lives to creative or artistic pursuits are aware of the need to strip away the mundane concerns of quotidian life. At *The New Republic*, we compose our editorials on domestic and foreign subjects while wearing loose-fitting robes in an environment of pristine white walls and gentle harp music. Rare perfumes scent the air, and only the soft crunching noise of unreviewed first novels being shredded reminds us of the suffering beyond our view. On the other hand, I wonder if Phillip Johnson doesn't go too far by doing without a bathroom. In an otherwise admirable effort to isolate his art from life's distractions, does he not confuse cause and effect here? If one dispenses with a telephone, one does not receive telephone calls. But what happens when nature calls? Of course there is that semicircle of dark green trees. . . .But what do I know about true genius? Perhaps Phillip Johnson has achieved a level of spirituality that obviates bodily functions. Or perhaps a bit of indoor plumbing might spare the nation any more constipated conceits like Johnson's Chippendale skyscraper now abuilding in Manhattan.

The current *Foreign Affairs* offers some light summer reading actually entitled, "Central America: No Easy Answers." The author has fellowships and grants from the Council on Foreign Relations, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the German Marshall Fund. A clean sweep! But for reading in direct sunlight, I prefer *Time*. Broil your brain for a few hours, then consider this thought, which opened last week's "Living" section: "If Samuel Taylor Coleridge were a contemporary real estate developer, he would not have decreed a stately pleasure dome in Xanadu but on a milelong strip of Los Angeles' Wilshire Boulevard." Don't be confused by the grammar (it should read, "he would have decreed a stately pleasure dome, not in Xanadu, but on. . .") or the spelling ("milelong" one word? how many syllables?); there's so much else to be confused by. For one thing, Coleridge only wrote a poem about someone who decreed a stately pleasure dome. Whether, as a contemporary real estate developer, he would build condos along Wilshire Boulevard or write poems urging others to do so is something about which responsible literary critics can only speculate. Who are *Time*'s sources on this? Is this controversial conclusion the result of the usual months of research by flying teams of correspondents? Or was it perhaps a case of a writer facing a file on luxury condos and thinking, "Isn't there something about pleasure domes?" Still, I think I may try this expository technique sometime.

"They threw a quiet little farewell party for Ernest W. Lefever last week in the State Department's bureau of human rights," the *Post* reported a while back. I've heard about parties like this, even seen ads for them in underground newspapers, but I was shocked to learn that they're actually going on inside the State Department. If the Marquis Donatien Alphonse François de Sade were a modern Washington caterer, he would be just the man to plan this event. Bondage freaks will be glad to know that Lefever is back at State again, as a special adviser on terrorism. I imagine he has ways of dealing with terrorists that even General Haig has not thought of.

M.E.K.

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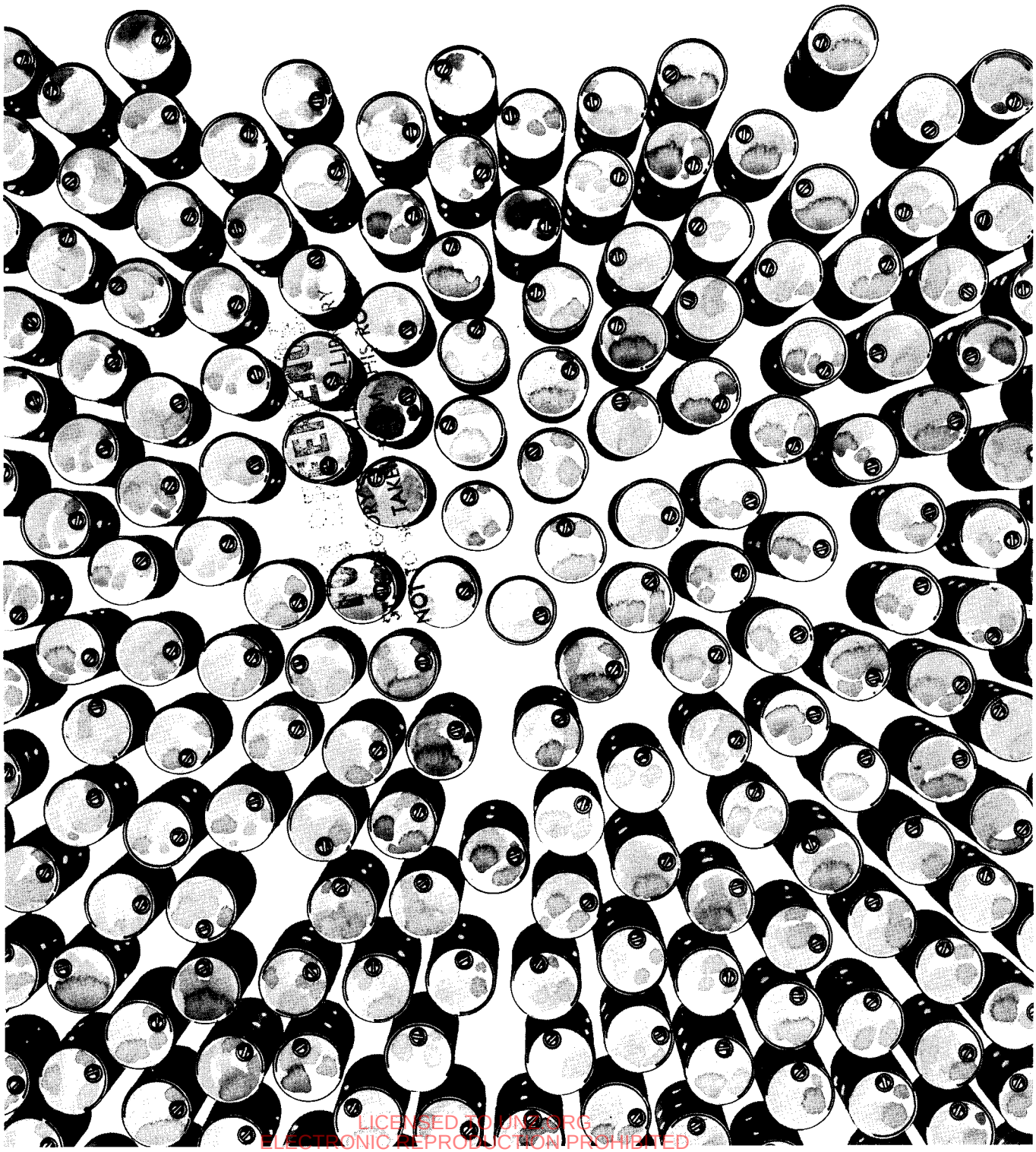

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